UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Impact of Industrialization and Resource Development on Indigenous Peoples of Northwest Siberia: The Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets

by

Aileen A. Espiritu ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History and Classics

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall 1999

National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Acquisitions et services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-46834-8

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

LIBRARY RELEASE FORM

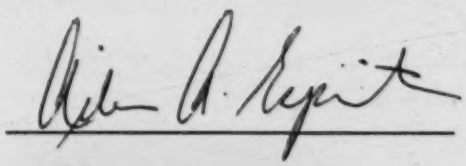
NAME OF AUTHOR: Aileen Aseron Espiritu

TITLE OF THESIS: The Impact of Industrialization and Resource Development on Indigenous Peoples of Northwest Siberia: The Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.



7351 Imperial Crescent
Prince George, British Columbia
V2N 2W7 CANADA

1 October 99

I wish I was dead, to avoid this earthly hell. What have I had children for - for this torture and disgrace? Let Russians be everywhere, then there will probably be paradise. They will have nobody to destroy and ruin. They will have everything; they will raze to the ground the graves of our ancestors and our own, and that's it. Nobody will ever remember that there were once Khants, Mansi and other useless nations.[1]

[1] ***Osvoyeniye bez otchuzhdeniya***, Materialy ekspertnova oprosa (Tyumen, 1989), 45.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *The Impact of Industrialization and Resource Development on Indigenous Peoples of Northwest Siberia: The Khanty, Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets* submitted by Aileen Aseron Espiritu in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. Roderick Macleod, Chair

David R Marples
Dr. David R. Marples, Supervisor

John-Paul Himka
Dr. John-Paul Himka, Committee Member

Dr. Cliff Hickey, Committee Member

Susan L. Smith
Dr. Susan Smith, Committee Member

David R Marples
for Dr. Frances Swyripa, Committee Member

L. Bridge
for Dr. Mark Beissinger, External Examiner

19 July 1999
Date

To my family

Abstract

This dissertation examines the relationship between the Soviet- Russian governments and the Northwest Siberian indigenous peoples, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, from the Imperial Russian period to the Russian Revolution of 1917 to the intensive oil and gas development implemented by Khrushchev and to the present. At the core of this analysis is the determination of how the Soviet-Russian policies of industrial and resource development in Northwest Siberia has effected the cultures, languages, traditions and social organizations of the Khanty, the Mansi and the Iamalo-Nenets. Intertwined with the oil and gas development is its impact on the environment and, subsequently, the effects on the way of life of these indigenous peoples.

I conclude by analyzing the processes by which Northwest Siberian indigenous peoples, specifically the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets have organized and mobilized to improve their position within a Russian dominated society and polity, thus becoming politicized. I argue that indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia root their politicization in their remembered and re-invented, traditions, language and culture.

This dissertation is supported by primary and secondary sources, relying on community-based interviews and surveys in several aboriginal communities in Northwest Siberia.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this dissertation, the hours, days, months and years of writing, was, by the nature of scholarly writing, very solitary. The seemingly endless nights of writing and attempting to convey ideas, research and experiences into words meant hours of solitude in front of a computer, or long walks on the Northwest Siberian tundra. While some of the journey of writing this thesis was defined by isolation, an exile to the Siberia of my own making, it could not have been written without the support of many. This project was generously funded by the University of Alberta International Office in conjunction with the Government of Alberta Department of Advanced Education enabling me to take my first trip to Northwest Siberia in the summer of 1993. The following summer, my field and archival research was funded by the Canadian Circumpolar Institute making it possible for me to complete the field work segment of my research. The University of Alberta Department History also supported the research by granting me two travel awards. Without the support of these departments, I would not have been able to begin what has now become a lifelong commitment to the study of Siberia and its indigenous populations. I would also like to thank Dr. David R. Marples for his supervision.

I acknowledge the support of friends and colleagues I've met at the University of Northern British Columbia, a niche for those of us committed to research and teaching on the North: Greg Halseth, Ken Coates, Heather Myers, Pat Norris, David and Wendy Del Mar, Theresa Healy. I'll always be grateful for those conversations with Gordon Martel and Valerie Martel that led into the wee hours and for their abiding trust that I could finish. I would especially like to thank my co-Siberianists at UNBC, Gail Fondahl and Greg Poelzer, who supported me at every turn. Their collegiality and their friendship were invaluable sources of strength at times when frustrations were at their peak. The café latte meetings with Gail were and still are times of enlightenment, balance, creativity, affirmation and reaffirmation.

I would like to thank colleagues and friends from Siberia who supported me while doing research there. Aleksei Zen'ko taught me the art of interviewing. His patience, tolerance and dedication has been inspirational. Aleksei's family, especially his parents, showed me a hospitality that I could never repay. To the many Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets families and individuals who opened up their homes and shared their lives and memories with, I thank them for their amazing generosity and trust. And to a little boy named Valera who brought laughter to our camp just on the edge of the Iamal peninsula, I hope that this dissertation tells even one small part of his life and the history of his people.

There were numerous friends that encouraged, cajoled, coerced, sustained and inspired me to finish this work. I would like to particularly express my gratitude to Shaun Narine who sent his inspiration across prairies and, at one time, seas, to inspirit me, probably unbeknownst. I would also like to thank Tuija Pulkkinen for the way she thinks and for the generosity of her spirit; and Malinda Smith for letting me vent and then for completely sympathizing. To Suzanne Anselmo for gifting me with my first ever book on Soviet politics and history, back in grade 10, and to her parents Dr. John Anselmo and Mrs. Janine Anselmo for always looking at the positive (and for giving me a job when I needed it).

Most of all I would like to show my appreciation to my family. My parents, Fred Espiritu and Shirley Espiritu were and are a solid foundation of support and love while I tread through a world quite alien to them. Their pride in me is abundant and perhaps not always warranted. I would also like to thank my sisters, Anna Poelzer whose level-headedness and calm in the midst of chaos will always be a fount of sanity, and Angela Espiritu whose creativity and sense of humour is an enduring source of exhilaration and energy. I thank Greg Poelzer for being colleague, friend and brother. Lastly, I would like to thank my nephews, Gregory and Max Poelzer who never fail to amaze me, to make me laugh and to remind me of what's important. They were the oasis of joy in the long road to the completion of this dissertation. It is to my family that I dedicate this work.

The ideas, assertions and arguments presented in this dissertation are my own. I do not pretend to represent the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, but rather present but a small fragment of their history. While I acknowledge the support of many, all shortcomings of this dissertation are my own.

Aileen A. Espiritu
Prince George

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction 1
On Ethnography and Ethnographers 3
A Brief Historiography 9
Aim 14
A Note on Methodology: oral histories 19
Mapping the Study 23

Chapter Two: The Beginnings of Conquest: The Medieval and Imperial Periods 28
Social and Economic Organization: *way of life* 32
Ritual Regulation of Life: *shared religious beliefs* 37
Contact, Conflict and Colonization 42
Will to understand: *power intellectual, power cultural* 61
Christianization: *power moral* 68
Conclusion 72

Chapter Three: From the Bolshevik Revolution to Stalinism: From Savages to Citizens? 75
Marxism-Leninism: inventing a multinational communist state 76
Lenin's Nationalities Policy 80
The Committee of the North 88
Collectivization of Traditional Economies: making Natives into proletariats 97
Conclusion 102

Chapter Four: Oil and Gas Development: A Road of Discord

A History of the Oil Industry: the Imperial Period 104
Oil and Gas Development in the Soviet Period 109
Oil Development Intensifies 113
The Economy under Leonid Brezhnev 129
The Gorbachev Period: *more of the same?* 135
Oil and Gas Development in the 1990s 139
Whither the Natives? Social Problems 149
Conclusion 152

Chapter Five: National Imaginings and Inventions of Tradition: Ethnic Survival in Northwest Siberia 154
Problems of Social and Cultural Degradation 157
Indigenous Response: the Khanty, Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets in search of a new identity 171

Conclusion: Identity Politics 185

Archival and Primary Sources 198

Bibliography 204

Tables

Table 4.1 Oil production in West Siberia, 1970-90 (mn tons) 134

Table 4.2 Oil production in West Siberia, 1991-1996 (mn tons) 134

Table 4.3: Gas production in the West Siberia, 1970-90 in bcm 147

Table 4.4: Gas production in West Siberia, 1991-95 in bcm 147

Table 5.1: Population of Khanty, Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets in Tyumen Oblast', 1926-1989. 159

Table 5.2: Percentage of Urban Populations in Russia from 1926-1994 162

Figure

Figure 4.1 Hierarchy of Administration in the USSR 115

Maps

Map 1: The "Small Peoples of the North" in the Late 20th Century

Map 2: Tyumen' Oblast

Map 2.1: Traditional Territories of the Natives of Northwest Siberia 31

Map 2.2: Medieval Princedoms in Northwest Siberia 44

Map 4.1: Geographical Distribution of Northwest Siberian oil 133

Map 4.2: Geographical Distribution of Northwest Siberian gas 146

Map 1: The "Small Peoples of the North" in the Late 20th Century has been removed because of copyright restrictions. See Iuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) for the original source of this map.

Map 2: Tyumen' Oblast' has been removed because of copyright restrictions. See Aileen A. Espiritu "From 'Aboriginal Peoples' to 'Aboriginal Nations': Natives in Northwest Siberia and Northern Alberta," in ***Contested Arctic*** (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997) for the original source of this map.

Chapter One
Introduction

Since the Russians first stepped into Siberia in the 16th century, they have defined the identity of the indigenous peoples they encountered and colonized. Russians first defined them as "foreigners" (*inozemtsy*)[1] even though they were on their own land, later "progressing" to "aliens" (*inorodtsy*)[2] making sure that they were still kept in their place. Under Soviet rule, the regime defined indigenous peoples as "savages," noble yet primitive who needed to be civilized and brought to modernity in order to serve the Soviet State and the Communist Party, whereby they would eventually become Soviet citizens. This was to assure the USSR's progress towards communism.

One of the most pressing problems that Russia faces today is economic development. Just as urgent is the problem of the environment. For the most part, whether in Russia or elsewhere, the two are inextricably linked. With the economic policies after 1928, Stalin made industrialization and economic development a priority over any concern for the population and environment. The building of communism in the Soviet Union, the Cold War and Soviet competition with the West, specifically the United States, led leaders and policy-makers to concentrate on the development of heavy industry for arms development. Moreover, the demands of the European U.S.S.R. for energy led the post-Stalin regime to look eastwards beyond the Urals for natural resources and other sources of energy. For all the above reasons, Siberia was seen as an important resource base for the future.

This development of Siberia in the Soviet period was also characterized by a disregard for both the environment and the indigenous peoples found there. As a result, the land east of the Urals became littered with one environmental hazard after another: the toxic wastes of Lake Baikal; the air pollution in

---

[1] "*Inozemtsy*" literally means "people of another land."

[2] "*Inorodtsy*" literally means "people of another clan."

Magnitogorsk, Norilsk, Cheliabinsk and other cities; the contamination of ground and water in many heavily populated cities; and large chemical and steel plants that released dangerous byproducts into the atmosphere. Russia will no doubt be dealing with these disasters for generations to come, but the singular tragedy brought on by this environmental and economic mismanagement is the environmental degradation of traditional land, and thus the cultures and ways of life of indigenous people in Siberia.

Indeed, indigenous peoples throughout the world face serious social and cultural crises as a result of the expansion of industrial societies. The policies of *glasnost'* initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev quickly revealed that the indigenous peoples of the Russian North and Siberia were no exception. Prior to the Gorbachev period, Western scholarship on indigenous peoples in Russia was extremely limited. At best, "approved" Western scholars were permitted to visit only model villages, the *pokazukha*, and to interview hand picked individuals. This situation engendered a scholarship that not only often presented a far more favourable situation for aboriginal peoples than was actually the case, but also a scholarship that was riddled with exaggerations and inaccuracies. Fortunately, the current situation in this region of Russia has made possible uninhibited research. Aboriginal communities, Russian academics, and state archives that were previously inaccessible are now available to Western researchers. This presents the opportunity to write more accurate histories of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North and Siberia. The oral history of indigenous peoples, previously unheard, can now be recorded along with official state records to paint a history of peoples who have undergone an arduous journey.

This dissertation examines a part of this history. It focuses on the impact that resource development and environmental degradation imposed upon the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets peoples of northwestern Siberia. In examining this history, we see how both the Russian Imperial government and the Soviet communist regime shaped the identity of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets through their colonial and modernization policies.

A dearth of historical studies characterizes this much neglected field in the study of the Soviet Union, now the Russian Federation. Western scholarship throughout most of the seventy years of the U.S.S.R. concentrated on that now defunct discipline of Sovietology, attempting to predict, without much luck, the Kremlin's next move, Soviet communism's future, and the West's relationship with the Soviet Union. The emphasis on proving or disproving that the Soviet Union was the "evil empire" pervaded scholarship on Russia and the Union republics. As a result, study of social aspects of Soviet history fell by the wayside. The native peoples of Siberia were among the victims of this concentration on high politics, and high diplomacy.

On Ethnography and Ethnographers

This is not to say that native peoples of Siberia were not studied at all. Abundant Soviet scholarship is available on most of the Numerically Small Peoples of the North as they are officially called, but most are written from an anthropological, ethnographic or archeological point of view. Many ethnographic institutes and many ethnographic divisions within history departments in universities existed in the Soviet Union, and still do, all concentrating on the study of peoples. In describing the parameters of this discipline, Iulian Bromlei[3] argues that the Soviet Academy of Sciences clearly delineated ethnography or ethnology as the study of a "category of objective reality, the 'ethnos.'"[4] Most of these institutes and departments concentrated on

---

[3]In 1966, Iulian Bromlei became director of the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences. He held that position for 23 years. Bromlei was the first ethnographer to become a full member of the academy. The Czech anthropologist Peter Skalnik suggests that Bromlei "jealously guarded" his position "with his definition of ethnography as a science of ethnoses," and that this prestigious full membership in the academy was a show of appreciation from the ruling elite. Peter Skalnik, "Comments" on Valery A. Tishkov's "The Crisis of Soviet Ethnography," *Current Anthropology* 33, no.4 (August -October 1992): 391.

[4]Iulian V. Bromlei, "The object and the subject matter of ethnography," in *Soviet and Western Anthropology*, ed. Ernest Gellner.(London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd, 1980), p. 152. See

the *ethnos*, on *etnografiia*. *Ethnos* and *etnografiia* in the Soviet Union, moreover, focused on the study of peoples of all ethnic groups, not just on small, "backward" communities.[5] Thus, these institutes not only studied the Nivkh, the Iamalo-Nenets or the Chukchi, they also studied the French, the Norwegians, the Ukrainians, etc. It was Ernest Gellner who first (and enthusiastically) called attention to the glaring difference between Soviet and Western studies of ethnos.[6] Gellner's enthusiasm was over the diversity and creativity of Soviet social anthropology as it studied society "inspired by the idea of an overall evolution of humanity."[7] In the Soviet Union ethnography was firmly rooted in historicism. Anthropology/ethnography in the USSR was part of larger historical processes in which an ethnos was studied by anthropologists who took painstakingly detailed information and data on their subjects, studying them over a very wide time frame. While Gellner sees this as a positive and a creative aspect of Soviet anthropology/ethnography, Tamara Dragadze rightly argues that the "main task" of Soviet anthropologists was to "classify all manifestations of social phenomena into their appropriate historical pigeon-holes,"[8] in effect negating the creativity and innovative character of Soviet anthropology.

While there are diverse views as to how anthropological/ ethnographic study and research have been carried out, there is one central and overriding framework in which Soviet ethnographers, archeologists, anthropologists, historians, etc. worked--Marxism-Leninism. This framework emphasized the stages of development of peoples, hence the abundant number of works on the

---

also by Bromlei, *Etnosotsial'nie protsessy: teoriia, istoriia, sovremennost'* (Moscow: Izd-vo "Nauka", 1987), and *Etnos i etnografiia* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1973).

[5]Bromlei, "The object and the subject matter of ethnography," p. 153.

[6]This began as early as the 1960s. See Ernest Gellner, "The Soviet and the Savage," with Comments, *Current Anthropology* 16, no. 4 (December 1975): 595-617.

[7]Gellner, "The Soviet and the Savage," 596.

[8]Tamara Dragadze, "Comments," on Gellner's "The Soviet and the Savage," 604.

ethnogenesis[9] of peoples. A major problem with this framework becomes readily apparent. If all peoples undergo these stages in development and history, then they all develop along similar lines. The variations come not because one people is different from another, but because a people is fortunate or unfortunate enough to have the assistance (or not) of a strong centre, a hegemonic power. Even then, the variation in development is not qualitative but is based on expeditiousness. With the help of a more developed centre (a dominant people and culture) "primitive" peoples may accelerate or even skip certain stages of development.[10] In the end however, the quality and character of development is the same for one people as it is for other peoples all over the world. The Russian, Nenets, Khanty, German and Mansi differ only in stages of development. Already, we can see some fundamental flaws in relying on this paradigm. Yet despite a seemingly highly developed philosophy of the development of ethnos, Soviet ethnography is fundamentally rooted in this linear development greatly influenced by Marxist-Leninist thought.

Related to and concurrent with this linear development is the theory that the strong centre that has "helped" the indigenous periphery develop through the stages of development towards modernity did so with strict adherence to socialist realism.[11] It is evident in the ethnographic "scientific" studies of native peoples of Siberia that socialist realism was not confined to literature and the arts. Because of these restrictions, Soviet ethnohistory concentrated narrowly on

---

[9] See Henry N. Michael, ed. *Studies in Siberian ethnogenesis* (Toronto: Published for the Arctic Institute of North America by University of Toronto Press, 1962); see for example Iaroslav Pasternak, *Vazhlyvi problemy etnogenezy ukrains'koho narodu v svitli arkheologichnykh doslidzhen'* (New York : Ukrains'ke istorychne tovarystvo, 1971) and E. A. Savel'eva, *Etnogenez komi-zyrian Dokl. na zasedanii Prezidiuma Komi fil. AN SSSR* 13 June 1985 g. (Syktyvkar : Komi fil. AN SSSR, 1985).

[10] Ernest Gellner, "A Russian Marxist Philosophy of History," in *Soviet and Western Anthropology*, ed. Ernest Gellner (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd, 1980), 59-82.

[11] Socialist realism was officially adopted as a doctrine in 1934. It was a method of art and literature (including scientific and social scientific works) that made it a duty for all to adhere to the ideals and philosophy of Marxism-Leninism in order to assist the state in its revolutionary development.

several foci and themes: culture, folklore, archeology, lifestyle, clothing designs, and the Soviet role in bringing socialism to these "primitive" cultures,[12] resulting in a better life for them. There is little, if any, depiction of agency amongst indigenous peoples beyond their supposed acceptance of Bolshevik power and its benefits. To put it another way, indigenous peoples were depicted as devoid of political, social or economic will. Depictions of dissent were narrated in such a way as to lay blame on one or two troublemakers: kulaks[13] or shamans[14]. M.G. Levin and L.P. Potapov's edited ethnohistory of the *Peoples of Siberia* is a good example of this kind of Soviet ethnography, indeed of a history of natives of Siberia. Unfortunately however, the American translated edition has sanitized it, excluding the scholars' overt hostility to religion and the passages juxtaposing the negative influence of the ruthless Tsarist regime with the positive impact of the Russians in Siberia.[15]

Many ethnographers chose to deal only with periods prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. The idea was to be able to function as an academic within the Soviet system without arousing the ire of the authorities and without completely compromising one's principles. Some walked this fine line, however. Hence, as noted, many in the West derived the impression that the native peoples of Siberia were far better off than native peoples in North America. This

---

[12]M.G. Levin and L.P. Potapov, eds., *The Peoples of Siberia*, English Translation edited by Stephen Dunn (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964) is a good illustration of this. First published in 1956 in the USSR under the title *Narody Sibiri* , it exemplifies the tenor of works on the natives of Siberia.

[13]So called rich peasants who were executed or exiled under Stalin's dekulakization programme.

[14]The spiritual leader or priest of Natives in Siberia practicing and teaching animist beliefs, and credited with curing illnesses, blessing a hunt and, most threatening to the Soviet regime, as the bearer of tradition, spirituality and culture of a Native village or kin group.

[15]Stephen Dunn, "Translation Editor's Preface," in *The Peoples of Siberia*, eds. M.G. Levin and L.P. Potapov, v.

was the image that the Soviet regime nurtured and promoted.[16] Therefore, the ethnography and ethnohistory that emerged was one fraught with untruths and distortions. Soviet scholarship on native peoples was intertwined with the state's attempt to "advance" the "backward" indigenous peoples of Siberia, and to elevate them to the same level as European Russians and other more developed ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, at least on paper. "The other essential requirement of the Communist Party's nationality policy was the rendering of aid by the Soviet state to backward peoples in eliminating their actual inequality."[17] In effect, the objective reality to which Bromlei refers when describing the science of ethnography is but an illusion founded on the Soviet centre's alleged benevolent policies towards the Native peoples of Siberia as it helped them on their journey from the primitive to the modern. With the diktat (strict Stalinist policy) of socialist realism and under the guise of "internationalism," indigenous peoples have been defined and cast in a mold of ethnographers' making, in stark contrast to how Native Siberians perceive themselves.

Even with Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*, Soviet ethnographers were slow to respond. Even after 1987, the ethnohistories written on native peoples in Siberia concentrated heavily on archeological finds, costume design, ethnogenesis and folklore. Only very recently have anthropologists and ethnographers themselves begun to question and criticize openly this type of scholarship. Coming on the heels of Gorbachev's policy of openness, and in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian ethnographer, Valery A. Tishkov (having taken over from Iulian Bromlei as Director of the Institute of

---

[16]Most notable of these was Farley Mowat, who upon receiving a guided tour of parts of Siberia wrote a very positive depiction of Siberia. See Farley Mowat, *Sibir*, 1971. See also the anthropological studies done by Alice and Dennis Bartels "Cultural relativism, Marxism, and Soviet policy toward the Khanty" *Culture - Canadian Ethnology Society*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1983): 25-30; "Some recent attacks on cultural relativism: a critical review"*Anthropology and humanism quarterly* 12, no. 2 (1987): 42-46; and "Are Siberian native people part of a 'Fourth World'?" *Dialectical anthropology* (Amsterdam) 12, no. 2 (1987): 245-252.

[17]Levin and Potapov, eds., *The Peoples of Siberia*, 487

Ethnology and Anthropology, and subsequently became Russia's Minister of Nationalities) roundly criticized the methodology of his discipline in his own country. Tishkov suggests that Soviet ethnography had a crisis rooted in "self-satisfaction and intellectual isolation" combined with "methodological *diktat* and political control."[18] Tishkov looks to the Western example for solutions to this crisis. He advocates an outlook that fosters "a more highly developed civic culture and strong attachment to academic freedom but also on a new post-modernist epistemology."[19] Given the state of a Russian society that is attempting to modernize and establish a civil society under democracy, we can understand the call for a highly developed civic culture and academic freedom in scholarship and academia, but one does not quite learn from his appeal what he really means by a "post-modernist epistemology." He does place a great deal of emphasis on theory and theorizing beyond the Marxist-Leninist fold.

On a practical level, Tishkov suggests that Russian anthropologists become more responsible to the people they are studying rather than to the government to which they have allegiance; that anthropologists do more hands-on fieldwork; that Russian anthropologists must stop assisting ethnic minorities in their constructions of national sentiment and identities; and that Russian anthropologists must make a concerted effort to forge contacts with other anthropologists worldwide and to read current works of anthropologists outside of Russia. While Tishkov's criticisms of Russian anthropology and ethnography in Russia are well founded and courageously articulated, there are problems with the solutions he proposes. Ironically, since he himself cannot avoid an ethnic Russian bias, many of his solutions are rooted in his hard-line criticism of the self-

---

[18]Valery A. Tishkov, "The Crisis of Soviet Ethnography," *Current Anthropology*, vol. 33, no.4 (August -October 1992): 371-394.

[19]Tishkov, 371.

serving concern of national elites, especially those who graduated from his own institute.[20]

A brief historiography

Monographs on the history of the peoples of Siberia have been few. The Soviet period produced the one English translated work already cited above: Levin and Potapov's work *Peoples of Siberia* published in the United States in 1964. The work covers peoples from West Siberia to the Far East, focusing on the non-political, non-volatile aspects of their lives. While the work gives Western readers an idea of who the peoples of Siberia are, the Marxist-Leninist (and socialist realist) interpretation obfuscates, even circumvents, the reality of their everyday existence and their attempts to cope with the hegemony of Soviet power and of Russian culture and language. That the authors overtly reveal their hostility to religion yet not the primacy of Russians in the lives of Siberia's indigenous population testifies to this. The same type of ethnographic material is typical of other works published in the Soviet Union.

In the past three years, several surveys of the history of the peoples of Siberia have been produced in the West. The first major work, published in 1992, was James Forsyth's ethnohistory, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony, 1581-1990*.[21] Forsyth provides an excellent synthesis of secondary material both from the Soviet Union and the West. Like Levin's and Potapov's volume, Forsyth writes about native peoples from West Siberia to the Far East. Forsyth begins from the conquest of Siberia by Ermak in 1581 and ends in 1990, just before the collapse of the Soviet Union. His work covers enormous territories and a vast timeline. It also covers an extensive and complicated subject

---

[20]See in particular the criticisms made by Stephen P. Dunn, Anatolii M. Khazanov, M.V. Kriukov and Iuri Slezkine in "Comments," [on Valery A. Tishkov's "The Crisis of Soviet Ethnography,"] *Current Anthropology*, vol. 33, no.4 (August -October 1992): 371-394.

[21]James Forsyth, *Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony, 1581-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

matter, not sacrificing the centrality of ethnos in his history. Forsyth ties the work together using the framework of centre-periphery relations averring that the relationship between the Slav, Russian and Soviet centre and the indigenous Siberian periphery has been an exploitative one, with Europeans dominating over the natives of Siberia. Forsyth argues that from the very beginning of territorial expansion and the colonization of the land beyond the Urals, the Slavs, then the Russians, then the Soviets have exploited the wealth in natural resources and fur that abound in the whole of Siberia. Beginning with fur, and moving on to fish, oil and gas, gold and diamonds, Siberia has represented a storehouse of wealth and riches for Muscovy, the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and, predictably, the present-day Russian Federation.

A major criticism leveled at Forsyth is his use of the centre-periphery paradigm. While it is an excellent tool of analysis, adeptly used by Forsyth to illustrate the acrimonious relationship between the centre and the indigenous Siberians, its narrow framework excludes the agency of these peoples over their own lives, i.e. their ability to take advantage of the colonial situation to their own benefit. Because he concentrates so closely on Siberia as a colonial outpost of Muscovy, Russia and the USSR, and the natives as colonized peoples , Forsyth may have missed the sometimes complementary relationship between the natives and the exploiters in the development of Siberia.

The unwitting response to this is Iuri Slezkine's work *Arctic Mirrors*.[22] Slezkine moves away from the oft-used centre-periphery, colonialism model and depicts a history that suggests a more fluid relationship between the Slavs, Russians and Soviets, and the indigenous population of Siberia. Nevertheless, Slezkine argues, natives of Siberia were and are considered an "Other," as outsiders: "(F)oreigners, aliens, pagans, brutes, children of nature, primitive communists, national minorities, or endangered indigenous populations."[23]

---

[22]Iuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994). Slezkine admits that Forsyth's book came out too late for him to have considered it, 4.

[23]Ibid., 387.

Moreover, he maintains that this "otherness" and antipodal juxtaposition of Natives in relation to Russians also meant difference, leading to a relationship of hierarchy with Russians having power and resources and the Natives none. This was not static over time. The natives were not sometimes seen as superior to the "civilized" because they were seen as closer to nature. Slezkine's account is very much rooted in Russians' image of themselves reflected in their insistence on relegating Siberian Natives to the "Other". What is strikingly different and refreshing about Slezkine's work is that he does not ignore the role that women played in the history of Siberia and its peoples.

The most recent work on Siberia is the more focused work on the Nivkh written by Bruce Grant. Grant's *In the Soviet House of Culture: A Century of Perestroikas*[24] examines the Nivkh of Sakhalin Island, analyzing how these indigenous peoples have fared first under Tsarist rule in the late 19th century and then under Soviet rule up to the fall of the USSR. Grant's remarkable study delves deeply into how tradition has been remembered, forgotten and invented in order to define Nivkh culture under Russian Tsarist, then Soviet rule. Traditions and images of both what "Nivkh" was invented, first by intellectuals exiled on Sakhalin, by the Russian Tsarist administrators, by Soviet political and economic policies and by the Nivkh themselves as they attempt to define their place in a new Russia focused on nation and state building. Arguably the experience of the Nivkh of Sakhalin is a universal phenomenon across all of Siberia and the Russian north. I will argue that some of these same processes of remembering, imagining and invention are present among the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets.

These are the three most notable academic works on Siberian indigenous peoples to date. Simultaneously published were two works aimed at a more popular readership: Bruce Lincoln's *Conquest of a Continent* (1994) and Benson

---

[24]Bruce Grant, *In the Soviet house of culture : a century of perestroikas* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 1995).

Bobrick's *East of the Sun* (1992).[25] Both Lincoln and Bobrick draw on the frontier history model common in histories of the American West in order to depict the frontier qualities of the vast Siberian expanse. In keeping with this frontier theme and imagery is the emphasis on Siberia as an open territory with many and limitless resources waiting to be developed and exploited. The frontier model used by Lincoln and Bobrick presents sweeping and romantic histories of Siberia filled with exploration, voyages and conflict with the Native population. They emphasize conquest of the vast continent whether through military or economic means.

Innovative scholarship on images of Siberia has come from Mark Bassin, in his articles "Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century,"[26] and "Expansion and Colonialism on the Eastern Frontier: Views of Siberia and the Far East in Pre-Petrine Russia,"[27] giving us an idea how pre-revolutionary Russians viewed Siberia, and how they regarded the indigenous peoples. Nineteeth-century Russian perception was stirred by their accepted place in the European sphere of influence, in "Inventing Siberia," and in the opening up of the American western frontier. Bassin examines Siberia as the locus of myth-making and marginalization, as the "Other" in the Russian psyche and Russians' imagination of their geographical space. The view of Russians living west of the Urals was "the colonial, or even better, imperial image."[28] Moreover, those Russians, who regarded Siberia and its native inhabitants at all, saw them as Russia's "foreign Asiatic colony."[29] Thus an "Orientalism" of Siberia

---

[25]Bruce Lincoln, *Conquest of a Continent* (New York: Random House, 1994); and Benson Bobrick, *East of the Sun* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992).

[26]Mark Bassin, "Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 93, no. 3 (June 1991): 763-794.

[27]Mark Bassin, "Expansion and Colonialism on the Eastern Frontier: Views of Siberia and the Far East in Pre-Petrine Russia," *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 14 (1988): 3-21.

[28]Bassin, "Inventing Siberia," 767.

[29]Ibid., 766.

as geographical space, sparsely populated by strange peoples, in the vein of Edward Said,[30] takes root.

Like Slezkine, Bassin contends that nineteenth-century Russian images of Siberia and its peoples were diverse and changeable--"from desolate desert of snow and ice to Russia's promised land."[31] Furthermore, Bassin avers that the construction of Siberia as "Other" is concomitant with the "complex ideological process" that creates this vision.[32] This vision, this construction of Siberia, although fluid, abides to the present day even under policies of Russian federalism. As geographical "Other" and as the imperial colony, Russians and Soviets have treated Siberia as a mercantile colony and a place from which abundant resources may be extracted and exploited. As a result, Siberia as a geographical space was and is not the only thing relegated to the "Other." Those who inhabited and still inhabit the vast territory east of the Urals, de facto, became "the Other." Hence the exploitation of territory for natural resources also meant the exploitation of the indigenous peoples of Siberia.

Despite limited access to government documents, primary source materials and interviews, some anthropological works on Siberian natives in the 1980s were landmarks in the study of the numerically-small peoples[33] of the North particularly the Khanty and Mansi. These were written by Marjorie Balzer[34], touching on themes of gender ritual and ethnicity and population

---

[30]See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1979).

[31]Bassin, "Inventing Siberia," 766.

[32]Ibid.

[33]The term more commonly used was "small peoples' of the north," but the ambiguous and pejorative connotations of it have led scholars both in Russia and in the West to use the more precise and less pejorative term "malochislennykh narodov severa" or "numerically-small peoples of the North."

[34]See Marjorie Balzer, "Ethnicity without power: the Siberian Khanty in Soviet Society." *Slavic Review*, vol. 42, no. 4 (1983); "The Route to Eternity: Cultural Persistence and Change in Siberian Khanty Burial Ritual," *Arctic Anthropology*, vol. XVII, no. 1 (1980): 77 - 89; *Strategies of Ethnic Survival: Interaction of Russians and Khanty (Ostiak) in Twentieth Century Siberia*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1980; and

specialists Alexander Pika and B.B. Prokhorov in the late 1980s. Balzer, Pika and Prokhorov argued that the study of native peoples living in the Soviet Union is just as important as research and study of the larger national minorities, the Kremlin or the Soviet secret police. Studies and research on indigenous peoples of Siberia have proliferated of late. Not only do we have the general surveys mentioned above, we also have more narrow and region- and people-specific works by a growing number of Western scholars from various disciplines. The majority of these recent publications has benefited from both the fall of the Soviet Union and the earlier rule of Gorbachev and his policies of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*. This political thaw allowed scholars from many disciplines to undertake research in Siberia, in regions that were not previously accessible, making possible contact and interviews with native elders, native leaders, and native villagers.

Aim

The aim of this dissertation is to analyze the effects of modernization and industrial development on three of the indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia--the Khanty, the Mansi, and the Iamalo-Nenets. In effect, I shall be attempting to answer the question: How and why did the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets come to the point that they are at now? The purpose of this work is to present a history of these three peoples, all of whom were affected by the same type of industrial development under the Soviet regime: oil and gas exploration, extraction and development. In so doing, I hope to illustrate that these same processes that have had an impact on these fragile numerically-small peoples of Northwest Siberia, exist for other indigenous groups going through the pains of industrialization in other parts of Siberia and in the rest of the world. With the use of government documents, other primary source materials, oral interviews

---

"Rituals of Gender Identity: Markers of Siberian Khanty Ethnicity, Status, and Belief." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 83 (1981):850-67; and Alexander I. Pika and B.B. Prokhorov, "Bol'shie problemy malykh narodov," *Kommunist* no. 16 (1988):76-83.

and secondary sources, I trace the evolution of resource development policy in Northwest Siberia, its impact on the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets and the resulting relationship between these indigenous peoples and the Soviet, and subsequently the Russian, government. Notable are the oral histories I collected over two summers spent in two distinct regions of Tiumen' Oblast'. I also had the opportunity to conduct archival research at Tiumen' Oblast' government archives in resource-rich western Siberia, and to consult with Russian social scientists who study the indigenous peoples of the Russian North and Siberia. I conducted field research in three Mansi villages (Listvienichnyi, Leiushi, and Shugur), one Iamalo-Nenets town (Tazovskii), and one Iamalo-Nenets village (Tibei Salei).

The rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 and the subsequent implementation of his two-pronged policies of *glasnost'* and *perestroika* did not immediately signal changes for Siberia and its native population. However, by the late 1980s, upon the suggestion of the Nivkh writer Vladimir Sangi, the Association of the Small Peoples of the North was formed. This gave the numerically-small peoples of the north a collective voice with which they argued that as indigenous peoples, and as cultures and peoples in certain decline because of poverty, poor health, loss of language and culture, etc., they should receive privileged and special status consistent with international laws on indigenous peoples. On 30-31 March 1989 the aboriginal peoples of Siberia convened at the Kremlin to form the Association of the Small Peoples of the North. Invited to these proceedings were the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Nordic Saami Institute and the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). The declaration that resulted from seemingly endless accounts of cultural demise, environmental degradation, high infant mortality, and high incidences of tuberculosis emphasized that the purpose of the Association of the Small Peoples of the North was "to unite our forces in the struggle for survival."[35] Under this

---

[35]IWGIA Document No. 67, "Indigenous Peoples of the Soviet North," Copenhagen, July 1990, 45.

mandate were many other concerns connected with attendant problems that went with industrial development, environmental problems, and powerlessness.

The convention was a turning point for the natives of the Russian North and Siberia as they became more politicized and politically active, forming associations (with branches at many of the villages) independent of the Communist Party. Many indigenous elites--mostly writers, and some academics--were also elected to political office. Already evident was a concerted rejection of their treatment by European Russians and the resultant state of their various communities--poor housing conditions, health care, substandard education and victims of concealed racism behind the slogans of ethnic and economic *razvitie*[36] and the promises of a glorious future under Marxism-Leninism. Clearly, the accounts written by the many Russian ethnographers and anthropologists were not congruent with the realities experienced and lived by the many indigenous peoples of the Russian North and Siberia. Indeed, these histories made no attempt at disclosing the full reality of what Native Siberians were undergoing.

Simultaneously, anthropologists, ethnographers, geographers and other academics of Siberia and its peoples were beginning to speak out about the failed experiment of bringing the numerically-small peoples of the North from their "primitive" archaic ways to the benefits of modern socialism. Because of restrictions on what could be written, in this case, about the indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia, the emphasis prior to *glasnost'* and *perestroika* was on what defined natives culturally as ethnic groups. Thus the focus was often on tools and implements, weaponry, traps, costume designs, food, aesthetics, etc. Some academics who specialize in the study of indigenous peoples admit, along the same lines as Tishkov's criticisms, that it is no longer satisfactory to write only about essential cultural artifacts that are quickly vanishing with the onset of modernity.

---

[36]razviti/e, ia [IN CYRYLLIC] nt. 1. (in var. senses) development, evolution; 2. (intelligent) maturity. *The Oxford Russian Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

There is another consideration that must be addressed in this study of the impact of industrial development on the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets. Having dealt with the state of the field of scholarship on indigenous peoples, it is appropriate to deal also with the scholarship on economic and industrial development in Siberia, specifically Northwest Siberia. Predictably, the scholarship on history of economic development in the Soviet Union is well developed both in the former Soviet Union and in the West. Even so, these focus mainly on economic and industrial development in European Russia. For the most part, the scholarship on oil and gas exploration, extraction and processing, as well as northern development are typical of Soviet material on indigenous peoples and other subjects. They are often imbued with socialist realism--offering the view that because of the Great October Revolution and because of Lenin and his drive to industrialize the abundant resources and wealth of Siberia, the USSR became a great nation.[37] These works not only stated and restated the potential of Siberia as a land of wealth and resources, and thereby its potential as a resource base for the industrial and economic development of the Soviet Union as a whole, they also extolled the virtues of the "Worker". The "Worker" was the backbone of economic and industrial development, which in turn was the foundation of the greatness of the USSR. These writers did not address the effects of this development on the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets or any other indigenous group in Siberia. Again, their primary role in the economic development of the territories in which they have lived for centuries, is dutifully and actively to promote industrialization and communism in their communities and in the Soviet Union as a whole.

The collapse of the Soviet Union did not bring an end to the economic and energy problems and needs of the former Soviet Union. Indeed, as with most other adjustments in the former USSR, it has made the development of the oil

---

[37]See for example K. Lagunov, *Miracle of the Age* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982); and, A. G. Aganbegian, *Zapadnaia Sibir' na rubezhe vekov* (Sverdlovsk: Srednie-Ural'skoe knizhnoe izdatel'svo, 1984).

and gas industry much more complicated. With the breakdown of the Communist Party, of dictatorial rule, with *perestroika* and with Western oil and gas companies investing in Northwest Siberian oil, problems of environmental damage, aboriginal rights and land claims cannot simply be ignored or suppressed. This is an area of study yet to be undertaken by Russian scholars.

Western scholarship on economic and industrial development is not written in such romantic and idealistic tones as that of the USSR. However, like the Soviet writings, it has neglected the segment of Siberia's populations most detrimentally affected by industrial development. Often these works concentrate on analyses of five-year plans, of energy resources and problems, and on strategic concerns for the West. With the exception of Marshall Goldman's pioneering work,[38] the effects of rapid industrialization and particularly environmental damage, have been studied by Western scholars only recently.[39] The economic history of regions such as Tiumen' Oblast' or Siberia predominates over any social history of the region. Moreover, because the resources in Northwest Siberia are oil and gas, the scholarship that prevails focuses on energy--its potential, its management and its impact on the rest of the world economically and strategically.[40] It is rare that the social impact of development, mismanagement of the centrally planned economy and rapid

---

[38]See Marshall Goldman, *The Spoils of Progress* (Cambridge: MIT press, 1972).

[39]See in particular Joan DeBardeleben, *The Environment and Marxism-Leninism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985); Phillip R. Pryde, *Environmental Management in the Soviet Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly Jr. *Ecocide in the USSR.* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); and D.J. Peterson, *Troubled Lands* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

[40]See Ed A. Hewett, *Energy, Economics, and Foreign Policy in the Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1984.); Thane Gustafson, *The Soviet Gas Campaign: Politics and Policy in Soviet Decisionmaking* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1983), *Crisis Amid Plenty: The politics of Soviet energy under Brezhnev and Gorbachev* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); for a study of one specific type of energy, namely nuclear power, and its mismanagement, see David Marples, *Chernobyl and Nuclear Power in the USSR* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1987); and especially, Han-ku Chung, *Interest Representation in Soviet Policy-Making: A Case Study of a West Siberian Energy Coalition* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987).

industrialization on Natives of Siberia is the subject of study in the Soviet Union or in the West.

By addressing the question of impact and effects of industrialization on the indigenous communities of Siberia, we turn the focus from economics, systems and structures to the people who must live with the consequences of decisions over which they had and have little or no influence, and who must struggle to find solutions to these consequences as they fight to survive as peoples and to maintain their identities as Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets.

A note on methodology: oral histories

As I have already noted, this study attempts to weave the voices of three Northwest Siberian indigenous peoples into the context of the history of oil and gas development and environmental concerns in Northwest Siberia. A significant segment of this dissertation is ethnographic, that is, it relies on oral interviews of peoples who witnessed, lived and experience life during the periods of the most intense and enormous industrial expansion in the Soviet period and at present. While I do not engage in the recording of life histories, I attempt to insert the voices and identities of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets into the history that I have written here.[41] I agree with Cruikshank that "recording a life history is usually a social activity. It is the collaborative product of an encounter between two people, often from different cultural backgrounds, and incorporates the consciousness of an investigator as well as that of a

[41]Julie Cruikshank has recorded life histories with her numerous anthropological works, most notable of which is *Life Lived Like a Story* written in collaboration with three First Nations women from the southern Yukon Territory, Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith and Annie Ned, Julie Cruikshank, *Life Lived Like a Story* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990). See also by Julie Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories: narrative and knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998); *Reading voices = Dän dhá ts'edenintth'é: oral and written interpretations of the Yukon's past* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1991); *The stolen women: female journeys in Tagish and Tutchone* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1983).

subject."[42] Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that these oral histories are key to understanding what the effects were and are of industrial development and industrialization on peoples who live in the remote north.

The First Nations people I interviewed were residents of Northwest Siberia. Altogether forty-three open-ended interviews were collected with a set of questions to help me lend focus on the interviews. For the most part the questions asked dealt with themes of industrial and resource development, changes since oil and gas were found in the 1960s, and changes brought on by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The interviewees were also asked about traditions, culture, and language. The interviews were conducted over two summers. From mid-July to mid August 1993, I was in the field conducting interviews in the villages in the Kondinskoe Raion, in the villages of Listvienichnyi, Leiushi, and Shugur the sight of the first gas and oil finds. The following summer, from early July to early August, I conducted interviews in the Iamalo-Nenets Autonomous Region, near the enormous gas fields of Novyi Urengoi and along the Taz River, in Tazovskii Raion in the village of Tibei Salei and town of Tazovskii. I interviewed mostly middle-aged and elderly Natives between the ages of 27 and 70, with the rationale that they are the ones who have lived through the most intense resource extraction and development in the study area. Indeed, as circumstances would dictate, for the most part, Natives within this age group were the ones available for interviews as many of the younger Native population had temporarily moved from the villages in search of work. Additionally, most of those I interviewed were women because they were the ones who either stayed behind while their husbands left for work or

---

[42]Cruikshank, *Life Lived Like a Story*, x. Cruikshank avers in her introduction to this work that "The expectation seems less that such accounts will clarify social structure and more that they may show how individuals use what Safir called the 'scaffolding of culture' to talk about their lives. The present volume is based on the premise that life-history investigation provides a model for research. Instead of working from the conventional formula in which an outside investigator initiates and controls the research, this model depends on ongoing collaboration between interviewer and interviewee. Such a model begins by taking seriously what people say about their lives rather than treating their words simply as an illustration of some other process." Ibid., 1.

who outlived their husbands who died ten years younger than they, on average. While the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets together have a history dating back centuries, trading and inter-marrying with each other (most notably between the Khanty and the Iamalo-Nenets), these three peoples were chosen because of their willingness to be interviewed and because of the relative ease in traveling to their villages and territories.

Oral histories as a methodology present problems regarding memories and the recall of those memories by questioning the interviewees regarding their lived experiences. Often, the past was compared with the present. Comparisons made between past and present produced both negative and positive memories and reactions towards the themes of the questions. For example, in the Kondinskoe region, when asked about the first time oil and gas was found and developed, many interviewees remembered it with bitterness, recalling the sudden influx of outsiders to their villages and fathers having to go further away to fish or to work. At the same time, these very same individuals recalled that it brought goods and jobs for residents. While oral histories also present the problems extant with selective memory, by cross-referencing the oral histories from the 43 residents and village administrators I interviewed, with the archival documents and with the government policy papers, I was able to piece together a history of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets in Northwest Siberia as their culture and identity changed with modernization and industrial development.

I cannot claim to have engaged in an ongoing collaboration with those that I interviewed, but I have attempted, as much as possible, to represent their experiences accurately and within the contexts of their lived experiences. Indeed, oral histories must be taken seriously. And in doing so, I have tried to focus on and privilege, when possible, indigenous knowledge about their experiences and histories. As Donna Haraway argues "[W]e are also bound to seek perspective from these points of view, which can never be known in advance, that promise something quite extraordinary, that is, knowledge potent for constructing

worlds less organized by axes of domination."[43] The voices depicted here tell of individual and collective experiences that, contrary to Cruikshank's contention, can never be fully and objectively (in the scientific sense) conveyed to another by the interviewer, the notetaker, the historian. The knowledge that we acquire, find, give, excavate from archives, tease out from oral interviews is situated knowledge,[44] and one of the ways that the social scientist can come close to objectivity is to define and name where she/he is situated theoretically and politically. To suggest an omniscient vision of what one is examining is not a guarantee of objectivity. On the contrary, because an omniscient observer has preconceived assumptions about what is being observed, the only way to dispel these assumptions is to situate the examiner within what is being observed, i.e., to ask particular and specific questions at the local level.

Haraway argues that knowledge is situated, and therefore indigenous knowledge, as with any other, conveyed through oral histories must not be taken as unproblematic because it too has a context in which it is located. This suggests that even if we choose to privilege indigenous oral histories, hence indigenous knowledge, we must still look at these types of evidence with a discerning eye for "positioning of subjugated knowledges are not exempt from critical reexamination, decoding, deconstruction and interpretation....The standpoints of the subjugated are not "innocent" positions."[45]

---

[43]Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14 (no. 3, Fall 1988), 575-599.

[44]"So, not so perversely, objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility. The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision. All Western cultural narratives about objectivity are allegories of the ideologies governing the relations of what we call mind and body, distance and responsibility. Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see." Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 583.

[45]Ibid., 584. Suggesting that objectivity is a "god trick", Haraway writes: "The subjugated have a decent chance to be on to the god trick and all its dazzling--and, therefore, blinding--illuminations. "Subjugated" standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world." Ibid.

Mapping the study

I have organized this dissertation in chronological order by periods in order to emphasize the differences in how policies were formed from one regime to the next, and, more importantly, to illustrate that there were stark continuities among the regimes with respect to the identification of indigenous populations vis-a-vis the needs of the state. What is manifest in the history of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets is that they did not go about identifying themselves and how they were to live, but rather their social organization, economic pursuits, education, language and lives were decided for them by governments and administrations located at a metropolis far removed from the Siberian northern taiga and tundra. While I will not be elaborating on theories of centre/periphery or core/metropolis, the history between governments and First Nations of Siberia is characteristic of centre/periphery relationship as centrist policies were made regarding indigenous peoples without heed to the everyday lives and needs of Native peoples living in remote Northwest Siberia.

In order to gain a certain understanding of who the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets are and the area in which they live, the next chapter provides a background of their ethnohistory; a geographical background of their territory; a brief summary of their colonization by the Russians; the early economic development of the area and their role in the fur trade; and finally, the colonization of Northwest Siberia. This chapter looks through the lens of Edward Said's *Orientalism* to investigate rigorously what imperialism meant for the Russian Empire and how this was translated into policies ruling indigenous peoples in Siberia. Chapter three deals with the period from the Russian Revolution to Stalin and the discovery of Northwest Siberia's energy resources. It analyzes Lenin's nationalities policies, the Stalin era and the enforced Soviet citizenship of indigenous peoples. In the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution and during Stalin's reign, the establishment of Soviet statehood, I argue, was the single most influential factor in shaping the identity of indigenous populations

across Siberia. Chapter four examines the periods of Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev (1953-1982), and the discovery and initial extraction of oil and gas in Tiumen' Oblast' and its impact on the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets culture and social organization and their environment. Concomitantly, the chapter delves into the development of Siberia and Soviet industrialization policies with the backdrop of competition with the West. The chapter explores the Brezhnev era of economic and political "stagnation." It examines the economic slowdown of most of the Soviet Union while the unrelenting and rapid development of the Northwest Siberian oil and gas industry continued. What we see in the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods is a solidification of Soviet influence over the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets and a reshaping of their traditional territories into industrial zones of resource extraction and development. Chapter five investigates the new leadership in the Soviet Union after Brezhnev's death in 1982. It analyzes the intensification of oil and gas exploration and what this meant for the Khanty, the Mansi, the Iamalo-Nenets. This chapter also explores the impact of this intensification on the environment and the Natives' response to it. It analyzes Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the impact on oil and gas development in Tiumen' Oblast' and the Khanty, the Mansi, the Iamalo-Nenets. More specifically, the final chapter probes the response of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets to decades of Soviet industrialization and modernization.

At base, the story of the Khanty, Mansi and the Iamalo-Nenets is one of cultural change and transforming identities. Culture, defined by Michael Hechter "must refer to the prism through which groups ascribe meaning to the physical and social world around them."[46] This definition of culture with regard to the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets suggests that culture is not static, but is in a constant state of change and transformation. We see through the centuries of colonization that the prism through which the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets

---

[46]Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 34.

see their world includes less and less of what they have regarded as their traditional culture, language, economic pursuits and life ways. The meanings that the First Nations of Northwest Siberia have ascribed to the physical and social world around them have historically been prescribed by outsiders. While there was incidence of agency early in the colonizing period, records of agency through the 18th, 19th and most of the 20th century are few. For the most part, the history of the lives of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets during these periods have been incidental to historians, record-keepers and tax collectors. Even rare histories written by Iadrintsev or Kennan on Siberia emphasize the administrative system and how Natives should be controlled, rather than how Natives have dealt with and coped with the policies of colonization.[47] Nevertheless, the history of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets is characterized by adaptation and survival. And it is also characterized by attempts to maintain Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets traditions, languages and cultures. Hechter further argues,

> But if the investigator is interested in the longitudinal process of social change, where the relevant groups are subject to frequent culture contact and exchange, then the maintenance [or not] of cultural differences over time may be an important clue to the nature of their relationship particularly in so far as dominance and subordination are concerned.[48]

My aim, then, is not to present a view of the Khanty, Mansi, and Iamalo-Nenets as having static cultures, but rather cultures changing over time because of forces they struggled to understand and could not control. For the Natives of Northwest Siberia the struggle to maintain cultural difference over time was an important clue to the nature of their relations with St. Petersburg, Moscow and Tiumen', as well as their relationship with newcomers to their territories.

---

[47] See Iadrintsev, N.M. ***Sibir kak Koloniia.*** St. Petersburg, 1882, and Kennan, George. ***Siberia and the Exile System.*** New York, 1891.

What I have outlined in the following chapters is a chronology of cultural change imposed by colonization. Within this imposition, historical evidence and oral interviews reveal that Natives have been identified according to the ruler of the day, and in response, Natives have relentlessly identified themselves as indigenous peoples. This is demonstrated in the Imperial period with Natives moving away from colonial settlements so that they could practice their traditional economies and way of life; and in the modern Soviet period, Natives demonstrate agency just by knowing a traditional Native song, or in the latter 20th century, by using blockades to reclaim their territories. Underscoring the theme of identity politics in this dissertation, I consult the theoretical constructs formulated by Edward Said in his work *Orientalism*, where he outlines the ways in which colonized peoples have been relegated to the margins of history and politics, even if they form the foundations of the economy. In my analysis, I build on Said's thesis, suggesting that Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger in their anthology *The Invention of Tradition* go a step further in explaining the colonial history of colonized peoples. As I argue, memory, imaginings, and inventions have played an important role in how the Soviets defined Native Northerners. Paradoxically and beyond the scope of the theories espoused by Hobsbawm and Ranger, today, these same ideas and motives play a crucial role in how Natives are *reclaiming* their culture and identity as indigenous peoples. Also valuable in this analysis of invention of tradition is Benedict Anderson's erudite theorizing of nationalism in *Imagined Communities* for its analysis of the creation and imagination of nations and nationalities. As I will attempt to show, however, nationalism is a two edged sword. While the imagination of nation has become the tool of survival for many indigenous peoples in Siberia, Russian administrators in the Imperial period and Soviet leaders in the Soviet period both used nationalist tools to create great nation-states: the census, the map and the museum. The Khanty, Mansi, and Iamalo-Nenets have appealed to tradition expressed in ethnic consciousness and "nationalism" in order to voice their

---

[48]Ibid., 35.

demands for political and economic self-government. Ironically, the Soviet regime promoted the cultural expressions of Native peoples' traditional societies through the *pokazukha*, or show. Subsequently, through what Anderson describes as the theoretical foundation for nationalism-census, map and museum- the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets are now striving to remember, imagine and reinvent their past in order to legitimate their land claims, their demands for self-government, and their survival as indigenous peoples with a rich and complex history.

Chapter Two

The Beginnings of Conquest: The Medieval and Imperial Periods

Inozemtsy. Foreigners. *Inorodtsy*. Aliens. Such were the nomenclature used by the Russian Imperial administration to identify the strange, "uncivilized," mostly nomadic peoples of the land beyond the Urals. The northeastward movement of the Slavs from Kievan Rus' and then of Russians from Muscovy through Siberia and the Far East in the last nine hundred years led to encroachment on and exploitation of aboriginal peoples and their lands. Moreover, assumptions of primitiveness and backwardness gave legitimacy for Russians to Russify and to "civilize" the Native populations by legislative decrees and force. As I will demonstrate, from the beginning of colonization indigenous peoples were forced into agriculture labour and by Peter the Great they were forced into baptism in the Russian Orthodox faith. The Russian Tsarist régime defined and redefined who and what the indigenous peoples were to be in an attempt to fit them into the economic development policies of the various Russian leaders from Ivan IV in 1581 to Nicholas II in 1917. Indeed the history of these native peoples who live east of the Urals has been marked by colonization and control by the imperial powers in European Russia. For the most part, this has not only led to the loss of territory by these indigenous peoples but also to a loss of their respective ethnic languages, cultures and ways of life. The purpose of this chapter is to give an ethnohistory of three of the peoples of Northwest Siberia—the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets and at the same time to demonstrate how Russian expansionist and colonial policies prior to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution affected the lives of these three indigenous peoples. The Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets peoples' development was shaped not just by changes within their own communities but also by the arrival of Europeans in Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets territory and their emphasis on resource

extraction and development, beginning with fur. These influences have led to syncretism,[1] as well as to profound loss of culture, language and traditional economies. It is evident is that because of imperialism and then colonization[2] and the incursion of Russians and other Europeans into Siberia, specifically Northwest Siberia, defeating and displacing the independent Tatar Khanate Kuchum based in Sibir' to whom the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets had paid tribute, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets took on a defensive posture in regards to their survival, whether as individual kin groups or as distinct peoples.

Max Weber argues that ethnic groups (or ethnicity) are "human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists."[3] Furthermore, it is "the political community...that inspires belief in common ethnicity."[4] It will be established that the ethnographic and

---

[1]Marjorie Mandelshtam Balzer, "The Route to Eternity: Cultural Persistence and Change in Siberian Khanty Burial Ritual," *Arctic Anthropology* XVII, no. 1 (1980): 77 - 89. Balzer argues that the Khanty's "acceptance of material and social changes has not prevented them from maintaining a sense of dignity, a cultural sense of "self."

[2]While the Slavic Principalities did not send out ships in search of wealth and land, they did exploit territories and resources much like the British and the Spanish did during the same period. As Raymond H. Fisher argues, "What the Russians [sic] did in Siberia for furs, Spain had already undertaken in Mexico and Peru for gold and silver." Raymond H. Fisher, *The Russian Fur Trade, 1550-1700* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1943), 28. By Ivan IV's reign, fur was already an important commodity for Novgorod and other centres, but with the conquest of territory by Ermak and the realization by Ivan that furs could bring enormous wealth, Siberia was colonized with administrative units established through most of Northwest Siberia, and the establishment of outposts as far as Chukotka and Kamchatka by the end of the 17th century. By this time, Russian peasants, *promyshlenniki*, traders, state employees, etc. were settling in Siberia establishing colonial outposts and small towns that became centres of trade, collection of tribute and government administration.

[3]Max Weber, *Economy and Society* Volume 1 (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 389.

[4]Ibid.

administrative focus on the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets as distinct primitive peoples set them apart from the colonizer. They indeed became the "other" in Edward Said's sense of "orientalism."[5] Siberia was known as the "land of darkness" where lived raw-meat-eating savage peoples, and indeed its far Northern reaches were dark and frozen for most of the year and indeed the peoples ate raw fish and meat. Siberia was a place of extremes of temperature, of quality and quantity of light, of open spaces that the Russian administration saw fit to explore and exploit for their own interests in the dynamics of power that Said identifies as "power political", "power intellectual" and "power cultural". However, the effects of colonization across Siberia was uneven, with the Native populations in Northwest Siberia the most effected because of their proximity to the centres of power, and the Far East much less effected because of

---

[5]"Orientalism is not mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" imperialist plot to hold down the "Oriental" world. It is rather a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the two is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, [sic] corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do). Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is--and does not simply represent--a considerable dimension or modern political intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world." Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 12. (Underlined emphases added.) Whereas for the West, especially for the great imperial powers of the nineteenth-century, Britain, France and America, the "orient" included Asia and Russia, for European Russians who defined themselves as belonging to the European sphere, Siberia (also called North Asia) was squarely in the sphere of the "orient" with Russia the "occident."

Map 2.1 Traditional Territories of the Natives of Northwest Siberia has been removed because of copyright restrictions. See has been removed because of copyright restrictions. See Andrei V. Golovnev, "Indigenous Leadership in Northwestern Siberia: Traditional Patterns and Their Contemporary Manisfestations," ***Arctic Anthropology*** 34, no.1(1997):149-166, for the original source of this map.

their distance. While the influence of official policies and individual Russians and other Europeans was also uneven, and indeed with some *promyshlenniki*, explorers and others integrating well into Native communities through intermarriage, I argue that the official power of Tsarist Russia and the encroachement of a dominating European culture defined the dynamics of power in colonial Siberia. The state's central concern was to maintain the production of furs which at times meant legislating protective policies for the Natives of Siberia. These protective policies were not always followed by corrupt regional administrators, however: many administrators sought to profit from the *iasak* payments, often resorting to punitive measures to extort more furs from trappers or Tsarist administrators would ignore crimes committed against the northern indigenous peoples. Moreover, Natives were also exploited by private traders.[6] On the other hand, some Native trappers attempted to glean more profit by blackening sable furs with coal knowing that darker furs would fetch a higher price.[7] The chapter will also illustrate the irony of how Russian imperialist policies that focused on otherness and difference led to the initial erosion of qualities that determined the ethnic identity and ethnic affinity of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets Natives.

Social and Economic Organization: *way of life*

The Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets[8] are three of the thirty or more officially recognized "small peoples of the north"—the aboriginal peoples of the

---

[6]Gail Fondahl, "Siberia: assimilation and its discontents," in Bremmer, Ian and Ray Taras, eds. *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 197.

[7]Ibid.

[8]These Natives of Northwest Siberia were also known as Ostiaks, Voguls and Samoieds respectively.

Russian North and Siberia who pursue a hunter-gatherer or hunter-herder way of life. The census of 1897 revealed that the Khanty numbered 19,659 the Mansi, 7,629 and the Iamalo-Nenets 15,858.[9] Russian accounts of the Khanty peoples suggest that they once occupied an area along the Pechora basin, later moving eastward and northward with the expansion of the Slavic and then Russian lands.[10] The Khanty and Mansi are both Asiatic peoples who occupy the territory east of the Ural mountains near the Arctic Circle on the rivers Ob and Irtysh. The Khanty and Mansi are designated as Finno-Ugrian peoples by anthropologists and linguists because of their language group. Although there is much speculation about the origins of the Khanty, Mansi and the other Ugrian tribes with whom they lived,[11] there is an indication that because of the similarities in language of the Khanty and Mansi with the Finno-Ugrian language family (particularly Hungarian), the Ugrian Magyars migrated westward to Central Europe founding what is today Hungary. While these languages are from the same language group, there are great differences among them. Even the differences between the Khanty and Mansi languages, and the dialects spawned from them are so great that they are incomprehensible to each other.[12] Nevertheless, because of the similarities between these two peoples anthropologists as well as other scholars refer to them as Khanty-Mansi.[13]

---

[9]Goskomstat RSFSR Tiumenskoe Oblastnoe Upravleniie Statistike, *Sostav Naseleniia Narodov Severa po Itogam Vsesoyuznoy Perepisi Naseleniia* (Tiumen, 1989).

[10]Forsyth, 12.

[11]See Forsyth, 11-12.

[12]Forsyth, 12.

[13]See Alo Raun, *The Ostiak (Khanty) and the Vogul (Mansi).* Subcontractor's monograph HRAF-7 Indiana-28, (New Haven, Connecticut: Human Relations Area Files, 1955). Moreover, Forsyth argues that the Khanty and the Mansis lived together side by side for so long that, although their languages are quite different from each other, it is often difficult to tell them apart by their physical appearance. "In way of life, clothing, dwellings, religious and social

Forsyth contends that both the Khanty and the Mansi "were not nations with a single ruler or a sense of common identity, but belonged to many separate clans, each with its own hereditary chieftain" and had principalities such as Koda, Kazym, Lapin and Kunowat. The chiefs exercised great power over their subjects and exhibited their wealth in silver ornaments and vessels as well as in enormous quantities of fur such as sable and fox. The Khanty-Mansi lived in forts which were encircled by "stockades and earth ramparts."[14] In keeping with Weber's argument that connubium is restricted more by "status" rather than "anthropological" differences between two groups,[15] Forsyth writes

> Irrespective of tribal allegiance, the whole Khanty-Mansi people was divided into two moieties[16], the members of which had to take marriage partners from the other group, so strict exogamy [meaning that its members could not intermarry] was observed. 'Bride-price' was paid by the husband's family in the form of horses, reindeer, furs, clothing, domestic utensils, etc., and a man could have as many wives as he could pay for.[17]

The tundra Samoied peoples or the Nenets (meaning man), speak a Uralic language which is remotely related to the languages of the Finno-Ugric family.

---

customs the Mansis and Khantys are very similar to each other and indeed are often bracketed together as one ethnic group." Forsyth, 12.

[14]Forsyth, 11.

[15]Weber, 387.

[16]Two or more primary divisions in some tribes.

[17]Forsyth, 11. See S.V. Bakhrushin, "Ostiakskie i vogul'skie kniazhestva v XVI I XVII vv," in *Nauchnie Trudy* (Moscow, 1965), Volume 3, Part 2 and Z.P. Sokolova, *Puteshestvie v Iugru*, Moscow, 1982.

While these languages are from the same language group, there are great differences among them varying from region to region. As with the Khanty-Mansi these differences are so great that the dialect spoken in one region would be incomprehensible in another. For several thousand years, the areas occupied by the Siberian Nenets have been adjacent to the territories occupied by the Finno-Ugrian people in Northwest Siberia. Archeological finds, however, place the Iamalo-Nenets of today further south than they are now on the Ob' and Irtysh Rivers region. The northward migration of the Iamalo-Nenets began very early in the second century A.D.[18] According to early historical records the Iamalo-Nenets peoples originated even further south with people speaking languages very close to the Iamalo-Nenets languages along the Ob' River and further south along the Eastern Sayan mountains.[19] Similar to the Ugrians or the Khanty-Mansi, but in contrast to the Finnic peoples, the Iamalo-Nenets are stocky in build with straight black hair.[20] The Iamalo-Nenets' material culture is very similar to that of other Arctic peoples such as the Yukagir and the Chukchi. These similarities are attributed to the fact that they live in very similar climatic, environmental and physical conditions. Common among these Arctic peoples are their use of reindeer. The reindeer was an integral component of the Iamalo-Nenets economy. They were dependent on both wild and domesticated reindeer. The Iamalo-Nenets used the reindeer to pull light sleds as they traveled from summer camps to winter camps and vice versa. The Iamalo-Nenets also bred dogs, utilizing them to control their reindeer herds. The Nenets also fish and hunt seals and walrus for their subsistence located at the mouths of the Pechora, Ob', Yenisey and Khatanga Rivers.

---

[18]Igor Kopytoff, *The Samoied*, Subcontractor's Monograph (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, Inc, 1955), 5.

[19]Forsyth, 18.

[20]Ibid.

There were several Iamalo-Nenets clans designated by territory and by several families related to each other. Clans played a central role in social organization such as marriage which was exogamous, hunting, fishing and reindeer grazing grounds, mutual assistance, and blood vengeance, avenging wrongs done to kin. Samoyed families consisted of several generations living together in one dwelling. "Descent was patrilineal and marriage was patrilocal," with the couple living with the husband's parents.[21] Like other peoples of the tundra and taiga, the Iamalo-Nenets had no permanent clan chiefs, except for special occasions such as a communal hunts or warfare, whereby a trusted and experienced man would be chosen to lead. The Iamalo-Nenets would occasionally come into conflict with both Russians and other Native peoples such as the Komi, the Khanty, and Sel'kup.

While the Iamalo-Nenets led quite simple economic lives, other aspects of their existence was deeply influenced by their social institutions and religious beliefs which centred around ceremonials and display.[22] They were also able to create and develop decorative arts. That they survived such harsh conditions suggests adaptation to the environment that belies the oft-used adjectives for them—"backward" and "primitive." The connotations of these terms would change over time, however. Towards the late 18th century, for example, Catherine II encouraged treating the aliens and savages in a more benevolent and generous way suggesting that enlightenment could be more effectively brought to the natives through kindness rather than through force. Catherine instilled in her policies regarding Siberia a good measure of charity and munificence, if not pity, towards the native peoples. As such, those who lived

---

[21]Kopytoff, 70. [sic, i.e. post-marital residence]

[22]Forsyth, 19. See L.V. Khomich, *Nentsy* (Moscow; Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka", 1966).

among them followed suit even if still repulsed by the filth and unmannerliness they encountered.[23]

Ritual Regulation of Life: *shared religious beliefs*

The Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets' religion is grounded very much in nature and its alleged powers are rooted in animistic beliefs. For the Khanty and Mansi, the supreme god Num Torem heads the nature gods. They believe that spirits live in all things natural, whereas for the Iamalo-Nenets it is the god called Num' the spirit of the sky.[24] These spirits are also believed to have been part of the family or clan which would then be taken as the totem animal from which they are believed to be descended.[25]

Central to Khanty and Mansi spirituality are their sacred groves. As Forsyth argues,

> Effigies of spirits were kept in sanctuaries in the forest where from time to time all the men of the clan congregated for such special ritual ceremonies as averting epidemic diseases or preparing to go to war. The tribal priests or shamans presided over religious rites in these sacred places, sacrificing

---

[23]For the Imperial period see A.N. Radischev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow and Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1959); N.M. Iadrintsev, *Sibir kak Kolonii. K iubileyu trekhsoletia: sovremennaia Sibir, eia nuzhdy I potrebnosti, eia proshloe i budushchee* (St. Petersburg, 1882), passim; N.M. Przheval'skii describes the Oroch natives as "Living like a beast in a lair,...he forgets all human aspirations and, and like a beast, thinks only about filling his stomach.... Nothing spiritual, nothing human exists for him," quoted in Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 79. In the Soviet period the term "primitive" may be found most commonly in articles written in the early 1930s by ethnographers who were attempting to implement Stalinist policies of economic, cultural and social development. See for example N.K. Karger, "Ocherednie etnografii na Severe," *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia*, nos. 3-4 (1931).

[24]Khomich, 195.

[25]Forsyth, 15. Each spirit is believed to be a certain animal and so that animal is taken as a totem by the family or clan as a sacred symbol of the one deceased.

horses, reindeer or other animals under a tree and smearing the mouths of the spirit effigies with blood to 'feed' them.[26]

Forsyth suggests that humans were also sacrificed in the same manner. These sacrificial rites were also conducted in Khanty cemeteries with the one sacrificed being laid in a wooden box on the ground with certain implements that she/he may need in the next world such as weapons, spoons and silver vessels.[27] Balzer contends that certain sacred groves were also used by women for their ritual ceremonies or as gathering places. Women, especially in the Soviet period, used the sacred groves as meeting places creating solidarity among them through a network of social ties and, thus, allowing them to be the bearers and transmitters of tradition.[28] Arguably, it was the Native women whom the Russians implored to bring civilization to Native life, encouraging them to practice cleanliness, and convert to Christianity. Women were seen as the way in which children and the rest of the Native population could become Christianized and, thus, civilized.[29] The Soviets targeted them also to urge cleanliness and hygiene within their families, but more importantly to promote socialism in the villages through their families and by participating in Communist Party work emphasizing that under socialism women were equal with men.[30]

---

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]See Balzer, "The Route to Eternity."

[29]A.. G. Bazanov, *Ocherki po istorii missionerskikh shkol na Krainem Severe*(Leningrad, 1936), 57. The same practice prevailed in other parts of Siberia as Bruce Grant illustrates amongst the Nivkh of Sakhalin Island in his work *In the Soviet House of Culture.*

[30]Taleeva, "Polozhenie nenetskoi (samoedskoi) zhenshchiny," *Taiga i Tundra*, no. 2 (1930):127-29.

Khanty religious identity may also be discerned from their burial ritual, which has been described by Marjorie Balzer. She posits that the maintenance of Khanty culture is illustrated by their commitment to beliefs "particularly those beliefs buttressed by the symbolic action of life-crisis ritual."[31] In an examination of graves in the villages of Tegy and Kazeem in the middle Ob' region, Balzer shows that the Khanty commitment to the burial ritual strengthens their cultural persistence in the north in Siberia, but a close examination also reveals that syncretism is evident even in this important symbol of Khanty culture. While there seemed to be a relinquishing of some of the elements of Khanty ethnicity, in the 1970s and early 1980s there was still a strong effort by some Khanty to maintain Khant religion and culture through what Weber suggests is "a powerful sense of ethnic identity, which is determined by several factors: shared political memories or, even more importantly in early times, persistent ties with the old cult."[32] Especially in the remote Northern regions of Iamalo-Nenetskiy Autonomous Region, Iamalo-Nenets retain remnants of their traditional beliefs in the worship of idols, in the afterlife and the traditional ceremonies and rituals of burial.[33] It is debatable, however, whether these religious traditions persist at all among the Mansi, and prevail only in the remote areas among the Khanty.

---

[31]Balzer, "The Route to Eternity," 77.

[32]Weber, 390.

[33] The Mansi, Khanty and Iamalo-Nenets I interviewed were reluctant to speak about their religion or their belief in gods, probably stemming from the persecutions suffered under the Soviet anti-religious policies. Nevertheless, it was made clear by some, especially the Iamalo-Nenets living in remote regions, by the response to questions on religion and faith that these traditional beliefs persisted. The reaction was often one of fear and dismissiveness without denial. One family in Tibei Salei when asked to be interviewed refused with great hostility. It was made clear there was someone ill in the chum the family was occupying and thus there were idols around to ward off evil. Non-natives are not privy to witnessing such rituals. The cemetery in Tibei Salei, with as many as 150 graves, were all adorned with broken sleds, tools for the dead to take to the nether world and food for the journey there. This illustrates that these beliefs still persist despite Christianization and then anti-religious

This belief in ancestral power is most evident in the traditional burial rituals and in the graveyards themselves. Some traditional burial rituals characteristic of Khanty are: protection from the contamination of death by cutting a lock of hair and burning it in the stove, making doll images of the dead, the watch over the body before burial and the placing of "grave goods" in the coffin of the deceased for use in his other life, the divination of the cause of death and the divination of the life span of individuals attending the burials.[34] Also characteristic of Khanty burial ritual is the removal of the body through the window of the house or dwelling, or through the door, taking the precaution of placing an iron knife on the threshold in order to prevent the "soul from returning home."[35] The graveyards reveal traditional practices such as the remembrance feasts, whereby the dead are fed by leaving food and sacrificed animals in the small houses built atop their graves. Boats, sleds and skis may also be found left on the graves giving the deceased the "means to travel to and in the land of the dead."[36] For the Khanty, the land of the dead is an ideal place where they live separately from the Russians.[37] While Balzer argues that there is evidence of syncretism as Khanty graves also have the Russian Orthodox crosses over them, it may also be argued that the trappings of the Russian Orthodox Church were outwardly displayed in order to avoid the wrath of Russian officials and settlers.

The division of labour between the sexes in Khanty culture and ethnicity plays a major role in their everyday existence and in their traditional spiritual

---

policies in both the Russian Imperial and Soviet periods. Personal Interviews conducted by author in Tibei Salei, August 1994.

[34]Balzer, "The Route to Eternity," 82.

[35]Ibid., 81.

[36]Balzer, "Ethnicity Without Power," 641.

[37]Ibid.

beliefs. In an article on the rituals of gender identity, Balzer postulates that these rituals are key to Khanty ethnicity, status and belief.[38] She argues that despite the acceptance of non-traditional amenities such as salaries, electricity, snowmobiles and motor boats, the maintenance of Khanty culture is strong in Khanty women, especially among the elderly. I found very little evidence of the maintenance of such traditions among the Mansi in the Kondinskoe region where they have been thoroughly Russified. The exception was one family whose male members occupied the traditional male roles of fishers and hunters, but the same may be said for Russian families who lived in the same village and took advantage of these subsistence economies.[39]

Women were designated roles and actions that defined their existence vis-a-vis men. This is most evident in the restrictions placed on them as women. These superstitions and restrictions centred around menstruation which is considered to be "unclean" in Khanty-Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets traditional culture. The Khanty believe that menstruating women contaminate, and they threaten the procurement of food, threaten social property and threaten spiritual life. "Menstruating females are also described, by both men and women, as abhorrent and insulting to spirits and ancestors."[40] Traditionally, girls were introduced to menstrual huts and purifying ceremonies.[41] These practices were also true of the Iamalo-Nenets who were very careful to designate separate areas for women and for men. Women had their own *narty* or sledge, for example, which were specially designated as feminine or masculine. This was

---

[38]See Balzer, "Rituals of Gender Identity: Markers of Siberian Khanty Ethnicity, Status, and Belief," *American Anthropologist* 83 (1981):850-67.

[39]Interviews with Mansi in Shugur, Tiumen' Oblast, Summer 1993.

[40]Balzer, "Rituals of Gender Identity," 852.

[41]Ibid., 852.

particularly important for hunters because there Iamalo-Nenets believed that menstruating women could bring bad luck and evil spirits to a hunt if they sat or rode on a male hunter's sledge.

Important to the religious life of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, and indeed other aboriginal groups in Siberia, were the shamans. The Iamalo-Nenets believed that shamans were already determined even before they were born. Shamans were the vessels through which humans could communicate and receive gifts from the spiritual world. Most shamans were believed to be able to communicate with the spiritual world by inducing in themselves a trance or meditative state by using drums and dance. For Native peoples across Siberia, shamans were important as healers of the sick and for bringing wealth to one's household. Moreover, shamans brought ideological beliefs and social order to the society.[42] As colonization and settlement worked its way to the heart of Native communities in Siberia, shamans clashed with Christian missionaries as they attempted to protect their beliefs and spiritual practices and their predominant status in the community. They would later be regarded as the preservers of their respective indigenous cultures and languages by their own people and the Soviet state regardless of whether they were Khanty, Mansi or Iamalo-Nenets shamans. In the Soviet period, shamans would be placed in the same category as the kulak. This would lead to persecution and death with almost the entire shaman population eradicated from Siberia.

Contact, Conflict and Colonization

The Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets have a remarkable history. Misunderstandings, violence and abuse[43] marked the colonized Natives'

---

[42] Khomich, 210.

[43] The term "zloipotreblenie" was used often by Iadrintsev to characterize Russian rule over the *inorodtsy* of Siberia. See Iadrintsev, *Sibir kak Koloniia*.

relationship with their Russian colonizers. Contact with Novgorodians, Slavs, Russians and Europeans throughout the centuries allowed for the trade of goods such as fur,[44] honey, wax and wood products, and eventually, also led to the erosion and degradation of what Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets Natives consider their social organization, culture, and beliefs.

The Nestor Chronicles suggest that first contact by Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets with East Slavs was in the eleventh century, when they began trading furs with traders from Novgorod, the capital of Kievan Rus'. By this time, the Khanty, Mansi and Nenets (both those living East and West of the Urals) were trading with fur traders from Novgorod, the centre of the Slav empire. Balzer contends that this commencement of trade in furs signaled the process of over-exploitation of fur animals in the north, and which marked the beginning of "cultural misunderstandings."[45] For the furs, the Novgorodians would offer presents and worthless jewelry, as well as collecting fur tribute as a form of taxation or *iasak*.[46] While the Khanty-Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets looked upon this as a good way to acquire iron and other prized objects, they in no way saw themselves as having a political relationship with the Novgorodians. Balzer suggests that it was the Tatar khans who exercised political power over the Khanty who continued to pay tribute to them until the sixteenth century.[47] This was also true of other indigenous peoples in the area of Northwest Siberia, including the Mansi and the Iamalo-Nenets who sometimes clashed with their Tatar neighbours over hunting and fishing grounds.

---

[44]See Martin, Janet. *Treasure of the Land of Darkness The Fur Trade & Its Significance for Medieval Russia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

[45]Marjorie Balzer, "Ethnicity Without Power: The Siberian Khanty in Soviet Society," 636.

[46]Later, as Muscovy and then Russia developed as an colonial power in Siberia, *iasak* took on a new meaning. *Iasak* would be paid only by those designated *inozemtsy* (foreigners).

[47]Marjorie Balzer, "Ethnicity Without Power: The Siberian Khanty in Soviet Society," 636.

Map 2.2 Medieval princedoms in Northwest Siberia has been removed because of copyright restrictions. has been removed because of copyright restrictions. See Andrei V. Golovnev, "Indigenous Leadership in Northwestern Siberia: Traditional Patterns and Their Contemporary Manisfestations," ***Arctic Anthropology*** 34, no.1(1997):149-166, for the original source of this map.

The area which the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets occupied was north-east of the Grand Princedom of Moscow (Muscovy). In the sixteenth century, the Khanty and Mansi lived on the stretch of land from the mouth of the Ob' and the northern Urals don to the Irtysh and then another four hundred miles to the east into central Siberia. These Finno-Ugrian and Uralic peoples were first exposed to the Russian imperial and colonial policies at this time. Russian expeditions and encroachment into these territories established "nominal suzerainty" over the Mansi, the Khanty and Iamalo-Nenets peoples who occupied these territories making the Tsar the ruler of these lands.[48] At the time of contact, the Khanty and Mansi were hunters and fishermen, and some Khanty in the Far North were reindeer herders. The Khanty-Mansi lived in log huts or lodges "made of branches covered with earth"[49] which provided them with their permanent winter dwellings. In the spring and summer, they would move from their villages and into the fishing and hunting grounds, living in "light rectangular shelters of poles and birchbark."[50] In the winter the mode of transport for the hunters and fishermen was skis, while in the spring and summer it was dug-out canoes or canoes made of birch-bark. The nomadic reindeer herders kept their herds near their winter homes, and in the summer they would migrate to the mountains or to the sea-shore.

What is certain is that the indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia staged insurrections against the growing Russian presence on their territory, most notably the strident and imposing rule of the merchants, the Stroganovs, and their Cossack employees Ermak Timofeevich and his band of mercenaries.[51]

---

[48]Forsyth, 10.

[49]Ibid., 12.

[50]Ibid., 12.

[51]Khomich, *Nentsy*, 44-45.

With the sanction of Ivan IV, Russian colonization and settlement of Northwest Siberia began. Indeed, as L.V. Khomich argues, the Stroganovs established garrisons to spread their control in the regions around the Urals and to enlarge trade with Siberian Natives.[52] In 1582, a segment of the Khanty joined the Cossack Ermak against the Tatar Khan Kuchum. The Khanty were dressed in fine furs, valuable jewels and silks, leading the Slavic men of service and administration to mistake Khanty elders for royalty ruling over the vast territory.[53] Balzer avers that this was a fundamental and serious misconception of Khanty political and social organization by the Cossacks because "Khanty leaders actually ruled extended families and clans by a loose system of popular consent,"[54] contrary to Forsyth's contention that the Khanty and Mansi chiefs wielded "considerable power over their subjects."[55] Nevertheless, the victory over most of the Native clans and the Tatars in the region was rewarded by Ivan IV and "Ermak and his fellow Cossacks won for themselves a lasting place in the galaxy of Russia's national heroes."[56] The Tsar of Muscovy also promised that "Iakov and Grigorii [Stroganov] are to offer protection in their forts to these dan-paying Ostiaks, Voguls and Iugras and their wives and children, against attacks by the Siberian."[57] And so began the invention of a Russian frontier

---

[52]Ibid., 44.

[53]Balzer, "Ethnicity Without Power," 636.

[54]Ibid., 636.

[55] Forsyth, 11.

[56]Michael T. Florinsky, *Russia: A History and an Interpretation* Volume I (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), 203. Celebrations, festivals, posters, books and songs are ever-present in Tiumen', one of the first Russian towns established near the sight of Chimgi-tura or Tümen in 1586. Tümen was transformed and Russified to Tiumen. For the 400th anniversary of Tiumen in 1986, posters, banners, booklets and museum displays were devoted to Ermak and his heroism in the opening of Siberia for Russia.

tradition in the midst of the expanse of Sibir' and in the interests of the merchant fur trade and agricultural settlements.

The invention of a Russian frontier tradition meant establishing Russian administration in Siberia. And so, immediately following the conquest and the somewhat successful subjugation of the Natives just beyond the Urals, Fedor, Ivan IV's son who succeeded him in 1584 sent *voyevodas* (military governors), *sluzhilye lyudi* (men of service) and *deti boyarskiye* (children of boyars) and *streltsy* (soldiers of the state) east of the Urals to consolidate the appropriation of the territory. These three levels of servitors to the crown would represent Russia and its Tsar among the Natives and peasant settlers. Trading posts and military forts were built establishing Muscovite presence in Northwest Siberia. Soon, the Natives would acquiesce and pledge allegiance to the Tsar in Muscovy and later in St. Petersburg. Along with these administrators, there were the peasants and the *promyshlenniki* (traders) who came by the thousands in search of "soft gold", and who would change the face of Siberia. The *promyshlenniki*, in particular, made a great impact on the aboriginal population because they had the most contact with Natives as they sought them out to trade fur with them. From the *promyshlenniki*, Natives acquired metal wares such as axes and kettles, European food such as bread, sugar and tea, and other items such as liquor and tobacco.

With Muscovite conquest, then with the consolidation of the Slavic principalities, and with Russian settlement of Siberia through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and later, colonization also meant the forcible taking of

---

[57] "A letter patent from Tsar Ivan Vasilevich to Iakov and Grigorii Stroganov granting twenty year's exemption from taxes and other obligations for their lands and their settlers on those lands in Takhcheia and along the Tobol River," translated in *Russia's Conquest of Siberia, 1558-1700: a documentary record*, Volume One, trans. and ed. Basil Dmytryshyn, E.A.P. Crownhart-Vaughan and Thomas Vaughan (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1985), 11.

Khanty-Mansi land by "Russian merchants and rich peasants."[58] The peasants took Khanty and Mansi territories and turned them into farmland with the approval of the Tsarist government. Native Siberians, along with the Tatars, were also forced into obligatory agricultural *iasak* (tribute paid through agricultural work) which proved to be a burdensome task for Mansi and Tatar of the Tabarinsk region in the late sixteenth century. In an appeal to Fedor, the Mansi and Tatars, referring to themselves as "your orphans" and to the Tsar as "Sovereign," begged for release from the heavy burden of agricultural *iasak*.

> In accordance with your Sovereign order, we, your Sovereign's orphans, have been ordered to perform your Sovereign agricultural labor in Tabarinsk to fulfill your Sovereign iasak. We, your Sovereign's orphans, have cultivated your Sovereign lands in past years, 1594, 1595, 1596, 1597 and in 1598. We grew rye in all those years. In order to perform this agricultural labor for you, Sovereign, we had to buy horses, and we have exhausted our resources in attending to your Sovereign agriculture.
>
> We have worn out our clothing; our wives and children have to go begging; and now, Sovereign, we are starving to death. Sire, we your orphans have no money to buy clothing. Sire, we, your orphans are dying of starvation and we have to drag ourselves about barefoot and naked.[59]

---

[58]E.D. Prokof'eva, V.N. Chernetsov and N.F. Prytkova, "The Khants and Mansi," *The Peoples of Siberia*, ed. M.G. Levin and L.P. Potapov (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), 515.

[59]"A petition to Tsar Fedor Ivanovich from Tabarinsk Tatars and Voguls requesting an end to obligatory agricultural iasak, the return of runaways to their former settlements, and permission to purchase axes and knives from the Russians," 7 January 1598, translated in *Russia's Conquest of Siberia, 1558-1700: a documentary record*, 33. Similar petitions were issued to the Tsar in the 1630s by the Koda Khanty who were dismayed by the abuse of power by Khanty elders whom the state was attempting to make into "Princes" to lead the Khanty in the Muscovite manner. See Bakhrushin, 128-131.

Soon after conquest, in 1598 and as the old Muscovite dynasty declined, Natives and others in Siberia were already under the control of Muscovy and later the Romanovs with the Native population having to ask permission and consideration from a strange sovereign thousands of versts away. Evident is the already immense authority and influence elicited by the growing and expanding Russian Empire in the initial stages of its drive to colonize Siberia.

Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets fishing and hunting grounds were also appropriated as Russian settlers fenced off rivers preventing fish from going up river and over-hunted fur bearing animals for commercial purposes.[60] The Khanty and Mansi were, therefore, forced to leave their own territory. The Iamalo-Nenets as well, who are believed to have lived further south and west than their present location were forced to move away from the settlements that were being established by the Russians.

Flight was not the only way that the Natives sought to preserve their land use rights and their traditional territories, uprisings from indigenous peoples also occurred in significant numbers and in significant intensities. One such serious (and used as a propaganda device by the Soviets) uprising was staged by a Iamalo-Nenets Native in 1830s. The historiography of the rebellion suggests that it was anti-Russian, with as many as 3,000 people organized against Russian rule. The rebellion was led by Vaul' Pietomin who reportedly wanted to establish an independent Samoyed state in the Northern Urals.[61] It is unlikely that Vaul' had any concrete political programme. While Soviet accounts have elevated Vaul's rebellion into the stuff of myth and legend, depicting the conflict as one between exploited and exploiter and, thus, obfuscating the details of the incident, that the uprising happened at all is indication that some Natives in Siberia were weary

---

[60]Prokof'eva, Chernetsov and Prytkova, "The Khants and Mansi," 515.

[61]Kopytoff, 9.

and resentful of Russian dominance. More specifically, Christianization and the burden of taxation were likely catalysts of the rebellion.

Taxation in the form of tribute was not confined to payment in fur or agricultural labour. Because of the lack of any significant European female population in Siberia, Russian administrators, early in the colonial period, forced the Natives to pay their yearly tribute obligations with women from their families and/or clans. Commodified, aboriginal women would be passed from one Russian government official to another with no predictable end to their plight.[62] Native women who were subjected to such treatment had no control over their fates, and were obligated not only to submit sexual favours but also to perform household tasks for their "owners".

The subjugation of Native women, apart from the subjugation of the entire Native population in Siberia, also took on the form of enslavement. After the conquest of Siberia by Ermak, women and children had been taken by the Russians as the logical reward for military conquest. This continued throughout most of the colonial period into the mid-nineteenth century as the problem of the shortage of females among Russians ensued. It was not uncommon for Russian officials to enslave Native women and to keep them as concubines. Men of service expected to have a coterie of women as they traveled through the country and were thus supplied with Native women. As N.M. Iadrintsev noted, taking Native women as concubines or as wives served both to satisfy sexual needs and "commercial profit."[63] As slaves, these Native women would serve as labourers in households, hunting, and agriculture.[64]

---

[62]Yuri Semyonov, *Siberia: Its Conquest and Development* , Translated from the German by J.R. Foster (Montreal: International Publishers Representatives (Canada) Limited, 1963), 77-78.

[63]Iadrintsev, 280.

[64]Ibid., 281-282; Forsyth, 68.

The use of women as commodities for trade and as concubines for the colonizers of Siberia disrupted family and clan life. Women in the aboriginal communities performed tasks and roles that were complementary to the tasks and roles of men. Women prepared food procured by men, gathered berries, reared the children, managed the household and were responsible for transportation.[65] The taking of women as hostages, as concubines, and as labourers by Russian colonizers threw the entire social and economic organization of the Northwest Siberian indigenous peoples into turmoil leaving the clans and families to adapt to new conditions. While it was common for war and conflict among Natives peoples in West Siberia to result in hostage-taking and to enslavement of women, children and men, the coming of the Russians regularized and systematized the practice of buying, selling and enslaving Native women.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the exaction of exceedingly high *iasak* payments forced the Iamalo-Nenets, the Mansi and the Khanty to abandon their traditional forms of economy of hunting and fishing in order to trap sables and, later, foxes for Russian officials and traders. A significant number of these indigenous peoples were transformed from nomadic hunters, fishers and reindeer-herders into trappers, trading furs with Russians for the Russian economy. The funding of Tsarist domestic and foreign policies relied heavily on furs as the major source of hard currency trade with Europe well into the nineteenth century. The exigencies of the process of state-building for Muscovy and then the Russian Empire led to the invention of Natives who were subjects and servants of state interests. For example, as Janet Martin convincingly argues, the fur trade in the late Medieval period was a major reason for Muscovite expansionist aims. She contends that "Muscovy's goal during this phase of its expansion was twofold: a) to acquire tribute in sable fur for the

---

[65] Bakhrushin, 95. Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 6.

grand princely treasury through the subordination of the north-eastern tribes, and b) to acquire a trade route, specifically the Cherdyn' route, that would bring commercial fur directly to the market at Ustiug."[66] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, fur tribute paid by the Natives provided the revenue needed to fund and supply Peter the Great's expensive battles and his Westernizing policies. Fur had become so important to Russia that in the seventeenth century, it amounted to one-tenth of Russia's state income.[67]

So dependent was the Russian Empire on the revenue from furs and fur tribute that by the end of the seventeenth century, Peter I was attempting to establish a more effective administration in the regions of Siberia.[68] The administration of Siberia throughout the colonizing period was replete with corruption and *ad hoc* policy implementation. The governors appointed to Siberia profited heavily from the trade in furs and from the collection of tribute from the Natives, extorting profits when they could. This was what Peter the Great tried to remedy and change by reducing the administration, not out of benevolence for the Natives, but rather in an attempt to make the exploitation of resources, fur, iron ore, and foreign trade more efficient and profitable; and in order to reduce loss of revenue to government officials.[69] Indeed, the economics of *iasak* was becoming less and less profitable for the state. In the first quarter of

---

[66] Janet Martin, "Muscovy's Northeast Expansion," *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Sovietique* 24, no. 4 (1983): 459-70, and *Treasure of the Land of Darkness The Fur Trade & Its Significance for Medieval Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and R.H. Fisher, *The Russian Fur Trade, 1550-1700* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943).

[67] James Gibson, *Feeding the Russian Fur Trade: Provisionment of the Okhostk Seaboard and the Kamchatka Peninsula 1639-1856* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 25.

[68] Iadrintsev, 300.

[69] For an account of one caught in Peter the Great's administrative reform, Prince Gagarin, Governor of Siberia, who was hanged in 1721 for his corrupt activities including profiting from foreign trade with China and taking bribes, see Sergei M. Soloviev, *History of Russia: Peter the Great: The Great Reforms Begin*, Volume 29 ed. and trans. K.A. Papmehl (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1981), 64-67.

the 17th century, the price of furs had dropped and by 1730, the sum of *iasak* collected was 100,000 roubles, while the maintenance of the administration of the Siberian colony was 135,800 roubles.[70]

In 1727-28 another attempt to make the collection of *iasak* more efficient was made giving Native elders the responsibility of collecting fur tribute, doing away with the state monopoly on the trade of sable, increased tariffs, sanctioned payment of *iasak* in cash.[71] The problem with this solution was that it lessened the control of the State over the *iasak* revenue collection, with the Native population taking advantage of their responsibility and profiting from it themselves by setting prices for fur for maximum gain and paying the state collectors in cash. The collectors continued to extort from these payments while the merchants avoided paying taxes. The Russian government was forced to rescind these reforms taking back its monopoly over the fur trade and forbidding private traders from going into *iasak* areas.[72]

Some of these profits were accrued at the expense of indigenous peoples' pursuit of their own traditional economies and customs. With some still operating by the medieval practice of *kormlenie* or "feeding"[73] (abolished in European Russia in 1555), men of service who were paid a meagre sum by St. Petersburg extracted the excess dues and taxes collected for the crown. In other

---

[70]M.M. Fedorov, *Pravovoe polozhenie narodov Vostochnoi Sibiri, XVII-nachalo XIX v.* (Iakutsk: Iakutskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1979), 48-52.

[71]Marc Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1956), 93.

[72] Fedorov, 52.

[73]*Kormlenie* was the way that the Russian administration sustained governors and servitors who were assigned to the frontier regions. These servitors would not be paid a salary but were expected to feed themselves by topping up the taxes, fines, dues, etc. exacted from the population and taking what was not required by the government. G.V. Lantzeff, *Siberia in the Seventeenth Century: A Study of the Colonial Administration* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1943), 19-24.

words, the governors and other officials serving the crown in Siberia participated in sanctioned graft in order to subsist, often to the detriment of the Native population. The government tolerated if not sanctioned this practice to a certain degree because it was difficult to control and because it stemmed any complaints or dissent at the local level. The aboriginal population, however, was the primary source of revenue for some territorial administrators, especially those in the most remote regions in the North and Far East.

Not only were Natives transformed into fur traders, they were also compelled to become farmers for the Russian state often having to pay for the tools required to practice this new economic activity.[74] On the other hand, Natives also willingly adopted tools and implements common to Slavs and Russians. For the Iamalo-Nenets, for example, the Russian presence in Northwest Siberia meant the acquisition of new tools and instruments such as firearms, nets, metal wares, cloth and dishes. Natives also became dependent on such Russian-introduced commodities as vodka, tobacco, and bread. While the acquisition of these new tools and ways of doing things may be seen as adaptation and syncretism, these commodities were often sold at exorbitant prices,[75] forcing Natives to into debt.

The Natives, as they had for centuries, also faced the burden of paying fur tribute. The obligation to pay *iasak* became so onerous that many Natives were reduced to poverty. It was not uncommon for *inozemtsy* and, later, *inorodtsy* to accrue a great debt burden not just to keep up with tribute payments but also to maintain mortgages or loans that were taken for the right to use land taken over by Russian peasants and to buy foodstuffs such as bread, flour, sugar

---

[74]See "A petition to Tsar Fedor Ivanovich from Tabarinsk Tatars and Voguls requesting an end to obligatory agricultural iasak, the return of runaways to their former settlements, and permission to purchase axes and knives from the Russians," 33-35.

[75] Iadrintsev, 282.

and tea. Bread and, concomitantly, flour became sought after commodities because they were a fast food that could be easily transported. Natives who were busy on hunts for fur-bearing animals in order to fulfill fur tribute could bring along bread to eat without having to worry about hunting for game and preparing it. This task would only take away from trapping fur-bearing animals.[76] Often, Natives were compelled to enter into mortgage transactions that the borrower could never repay, even with debt payments negotiated to last two-hundred years. Russian traders, merchants and peasants, also in debt to the government, often took advantage of the Natives' inexperience and ignorance concerning the concept of debt and debt payments so that a significant number of Siberian Natives entered into these transactions that amounted to usury with interest rates at times being as high as 300 percent. As non-European peoples the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets were seen as an inferior race by the Russians, and were therefore exploited for their labour, their goods and their resources.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the economic situation for the Natives became more difficult. Many were very poor by West European, and even Russian European, standards as they were unable to participate fully in the Russian settler communities, and by Native standards because those living close to Russian settlements no longer fully practiced the traditional Native lifestyle and economy. This was often not by choice as Natives had to trade furs, hunt, fish, gather berries, farm, etc. not for their own subsistence, but in order keep up with tribute and loan obligations into which they had entered.[77] The predicament presaged what would become of the Natives as they became minorities on their traditional territories.

---

[76]Ibid., 102-103.

[77]Ibid., 86-105.

By Catherine II's reign, reports characterized Siberia and Siberian Natives as equivalent to "alien colonies and Russian India, where it was necessary to liberalize colonial politics."[78] In keeping with her enlightened ideas, attempts were made by Catherine II to make the burden of paying tribute less demanding for the Natives. Catherine proposed that tribute should become the burden of the clan rather than the individual male soul or family, thus lessening the onus. It would be the responsibility of the clan chief to collect tribute from each male clan member. In practice, this measure did not alleviate the Natives' predicament as more and more of them were relegated to penury.[79]

Altogether deleterious for the Northwest Siberian Natives were the permanent settlements, towns, villages and cities occupied by Russian peasants, merchants and administrators. While villages and towns had already been established by the mid-seventeenth century in Northwest Siberia, by the nineteenth century significant numbers of Russian settlers in the region took over land for agricultural purposes and the Russian political administration attempted to further regulate relations with the Natives. As with the Native population in Canada, especially those in the Northwest coast of British Columbia, non-Native settlement and non-Native settlers proved devastating to the maintenance of indigenous traditions, identity, language and territory.[80] While accurate numbers and corresponding figures are difficult to obtain for population statistics prior to 1897, some sources suggest significant and very rapid increase in the Russian and European population with only incremental increase in the number of Native Siberians. In 1662 the Slavic and European population in Siberia was 105,000 with the total figures estimated at 393,000. But

---

[78]Ibid., 106.

[79]Ibid., 106-108.

[80]Robin Fisher, "The Image of the Indian," in Robin Fisher and Ken Coates, eds. *Out of the Background* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988), 167-189.

in 1763, the Russian and European population was 420,000, compared to the native population which was 260,000. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the number of Russians living in Siberia had tripled from the calculation of 900,000 in the late eighteenth century. In 1897, Russians made up over 80 percent of the Siberian population at around 5 million, and the Siberian aboriginal peoples less than 20 percent at around 870,000.[81] By 1911, the aboriginal population comprised only 11.5 percent of the total population in Siberia.[82] The increase in Native population was clearly slower than the increase in the Russian population in Siberia.

Permanent settlement by large numbers of Europeans brought a different quality of relationship between the Natives and the Europeans especially once Count Mikhail Speranskii implemented his reforms in Siberia in 1822. Appointed governor general of Siberia by Alexander I in 1819 after a period of exile first in Nizhni-Novgorod and then Perm in 1812 as punishment for his liberal bureaucratic reforms, Speranskii aimed to bring bureaucratic order to Siberia and its Russian and Native population as he had attempted to do in European Russia. Speranskii was a remarkable figure. The son of a priest, educated in a theological seminary, he transferred to civil service, rose through the bureaucratic ranks quickly and was known for his intelligence and precision. He had so impressed Alexander I that by 1808 he was appointed assistant minister of justice and by 1810 secretary of state. He became quite influential in the royal court, with Alexander commissioning him to draft a constitutional reform in late 1808. The core of the reforms called for the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers and were far too liberal and revolutionary to be accepted by the conservative elements in Alexander's court. Eventually, these conservatives including the Grand Duchess Catherine, Alexander's friend Count Arakcheev

---

[81] *Aziatskaia Rossiia* 3 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1914), vol. 1, 81.

[82] Forsyth, 115.

and the historian Nicholas Karamzin convinced the Tsar that Speranskii's radical reforms and his admiration for Napoleon proved that he was a traitor.[83]

The new legislation authored by Speranskii in "Administration of Non-Russian Minorities Act" in July 1822 and subsequently amended to "The Non-Russian Minorities Act," and was in effect until 1917[84] what governed Russian relations with the indigenous population of the Russian North and Siberia. Reforms on the regulation of the *inozemtsy*, while intended by Speranskii to better the plight of the Natives by keeping a system of order and bureaucracy in the regions, actually worsened the situation for them. Speranskii's reforms of 1822, much like the reforms instituted by Tsars and administrators from Ivan IV onward, again attempted to redefine the role of indigenous peoples within the Tsarist régime, and how they could better serve and fit into state and society of nineteenth century Russia. Under Speranskii's reforms, the *iasak*-paying people of Siberia would be hitherto known as *inorodtsy*—aliens. While *inorodtsy* was not clearly defined in the statute, Natives were divided into three categories: *osedlye* (settled) who lived in or near the Russian settlements in permanent dwellings; *kochevye* (nomadic) who moved from winter dwelling to summer dwelling; *brodyachiye* (wandering) who supposedly wandered constantly without territory. Speranskii aimed to give Natives a certain amount of self-government in their own communities by establishing clan directorates and steppe councils.[85] As Forsyth argues, however, the reforms served to reinforce the rule of one clan chief over the entire clan as opposed to a rotating arrangement as it had been

---

[83]Florinsky, 696-700.

[84]The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Committee of Nationalities, "Acts and other legislative standards relating to the political and socio-economic development of the indigenous peoples of Russia, (19th -20th centuries): self-government, land and natural resources," Report to the International Conference to Assist Russian Federal Programmes Supporting Aboriginal Peoples of the Russian North (Moscow, 1995), 5.

[85]Iadrintsev, 108-109.

traditionally.[86] Furthermore, as Andrei V. Golovnev contends, "the new law became a major step towards making the indigenous leadership subordinate to the state."[87]

The reforms not only classified the Natives into the three categories, they also changed the Natives' obligation to the state. Now all natives would be obligated to the state in equal ways but still be considered *inorodtsy*: The *inorodtsy* classified in the settled category had the same rights and obligations as Russians who were state peasants or merchants but were not allowed to serve in the army; those in the nomad category lived as they had before within their clans and their own territory paying fur tribute and local taxes; and the wandering category of *inorodtsy* would be obligated by *iasak* only, now freed from all other taxes and dues, and free to roam from one region to another without restrictions.[88] Problems with the categories emerged almost immediately. Natives complained of being placed under the settled category which demanded the most obligation. The Khanty of the Obdorsk region protested strenuously their classification as "nomads" while in the adjacent territory, the Iamalo-Nenets were classified as "wandering" and, therefore, were subject to less exaction by the government. Under great pressure from the complaining Natives in the Northern Ob' region, the government was forced to reclassify the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets as "wandering" five years after Speranskii's reforms were implemented.[89]

---

[86] Forsyth, 157.

[87] Andrei V. Golovnev, "Indigenous Leadership in Northwestern Siberia: Traditional Patterns and Their Contemporary Manisfestations," *Arctic Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (1997):149-166.

[88] Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 84.

[89] Ibid., 89.

These reforms were clearly well-formulated by their creators, Speranskii and Gavriil Stepanovich Baten'kov.[90] Speranskii wanted to ensure that they took into consideration the context of time and place in which they were to be implemented. He and Baten'kov spent almost three years in preparatory research. The authors had considered the way of life of the Natives and decided that their lifestyles were determined by the formidable environment, the harsh climate and the sometimes scarce resources available in the territories that they lived and from this emerged the three categories of "alien". The notion of "alien" in itself was intended to be a level above the previous category of "foreigner" or *inozemtsy*. Speranskii and Baten'kov did not consider the fact that the Native population had become accustomed to the administration that they had been under since Ermak subdued Kuchum some 350 years before. Even if aimed at improving the lot of the Native population, the policies served to reshape the Natives into a settled population pursuing an agricultural economy much like the Russian population of Siberia. In effect, the Russian administration was turning Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets into Russians.

Speranskii's and Baten'kov's reforms also placed a heavier burden on the Natives. Colonization and settlement by the Russians in the mid-1800s was again defined by misunderstandings of native culture and organization. To suggest, as Speranskii did, that Natives could be classified according to their "development" as cultures, as societies and even as human beings clearly manifested a lack of insight into the plurality of ways of life, historical memory and beliefs of the various Natives across Siberia. Misunderstandings ensued because of Russian state interests and, to reiterate what Said avers, of their "will or intention to

---

[90]Gavriil Stepanovich Baten'kov (1793-1863) participated in the war of 1812 and the foreign campaigns. He was a Decembrist exiled to Siberia and worked as a communications engineer for Speranskii. Baten'kov remained in penal servitude for 20 years.

understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different...world."[91]

Will to understand: *power intellectual, power cultural*

Not only were the indigenous peoples regarded with ambivalence and prejudice within the context of difference, the Russian government, intellectuals and reformers regarded the extraordinary land beyond the Urals as Russia's geographical "other," very much in keeping with Europeans' consideration of Russia as its geographical "other." These different social groups saw Siberia in very different ways, however. It conjured fear, apprehension, economic and social backwardness, democracy and egalitarian values in the imagination of conservatives, reformers and intellectuals. As Mark Bassin contends, "in each case, [these images] represented the careful...construction or invention, for a specific purpose, of an external world or geographical Other of a particular type."[92] Writing in 1891, George Kennan portrayed an image of Siberia that was "a vast dumping ground for criminals."[93] As colonization began to replace imperialism, Siberia came to be seen as a land of bountiful natural resources waiting to be extracted and developed.[94] These two seemingly incompatible views of Siberia would serve to complement each other as criminals were exiled to Siberia to fill the demand for labour. The exile of the unwanted convicts, brigands and various low-lifes of the Russian Empire to Siberia as labourers

---

[91] Said, 12.

[92]Mark Bassin, "Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 96, no. 3 (June 1991): 763-794.

[93]See George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System* (New York, 1891).

[94]Alan Wood, "Sex and Violence in Siberia: Aspects of the Tsarist Exile System," *Siberia: Two Historical Perspectives* (London: The Great Britain-USSR Association and The School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1984), 24-25.

began under Peter the Great and would reach its apogee during the nineteenth century.[95]

As Vasilii Tatishchev, geographer and historian in Peter I's court, in the 1730s, maintained that the Ural Mountains constituted the dividing line between Europe and Asia, so too did the Russian Imperial government and other intellectuals. This emphasis on otherness and difference from Asia served to legitimize colonial rule in Great Tatary.[96] By contrast Russia was westernizing. "The creation of this non-European geographical Other was essential to the latter process, for it was well appreciated that Siberia qua Asia represented a reliable and incontestable contrast that helped confirm the European identity of Russia west of the Urals." [97] Russia needed to conjure a polar opposite for itself as a developing imperial power very much like Imperial Britain, France or the Netherlands would in their bid to found empires, and later, in their relationship with the Orient.[98] It needed to do this because Russia was self-conscious of being seen by Europeans as its Other, not quite as civilized or cultured as they. By presenting itself to be as European as possible, Russian colonial rule could claim to be, therefore, was consistent with how other European imperial regimes dealt with their territorial possessions. A self-conscious Russia was attempting to cast itself in the mold of Europe *not* Asia. With Siberia as the "other", Russia could juxtapose itself from a territory that needed to be conquered, tamed and civilized; when fur-bearing animals were still in abundance, Siberia offered a valuable commodity. By emphasizing its difference from Siberia, or North Asia,

---

[95]Ibid.

[96] Bassin, 768.

[97] Ibid., 768.

[98] See Said, *Orientalism*.

Russia was distancing itself from Asiatic backwardness and strangeness--where despotic rule abided and European manners were non-existent.

While Gerhard Müller, writing in the 1720s, characterized Ermak *Timofeevich* who opened up Siberia for the Russians as "nothing more than a fugitive cossack...and chief of a troop of banditti,"[99] by the 1830s, influenced by the Napoleonic wars and victory over Napoleon and his army, and in the fervor of an emerging Russian nationalism, Russian history was rewritten and Ermak was hailed a hero. Ermak was at first compared and likened to such great explorers as Cortes of Spain, but then the comparison was rejected because Ermak clearly superseded Cortes' accomplishments. Government officials, assisted by intellectuals, promoted Russian nationalism within the context of state- and nation-building and so heroes, legends and myths about Siberia were invented.

The hero-worship or rather the invention of a hero in Ermak coincided with Nicholas I's three-pronged policy, formulated in 1833 by his Minister of Education S.S. Uvarov: orthodoxy, autocracy and narodnost' (nationality). Turning away from the liberalism and Enlightenment ideas promulgated by Catherine II and later Alexander I, Nicholas I (1825-55) valued order and duty. By Orthodoxy, Nicholas meant adherence to the Russian Orthodox Church as the defining spiritual and religious symbol of Russia. If one lived in the Russian Empire but was not a Russian Orthodox Christian, then one was not a full member of the Russian nation and community, and thus was open to persecution. Autocracy meant allegiance to the Tsar, and to his rule. The Tsar alone had the right to rule with certain authority because he represented God on earth. There was also an accepted and pervasive belief that Russians needed to

---

[99] Quoted in Bassin, "Inventing Siberia," 780.

be ruled autocratically because they were "low, horrid and beastly."[100] Narodnost' or nationalism, defined less precisely, suggested that Russia was young, innocent and pure, and with great potential, and a rich future. It was this category that seemed to have captured the imagination of a small number of intellectuals, such as Alexander Herzen. It was a small segment of the intelligentsia bent on change and reform despite the prosecution of participants in the Decembrist Revolt. Nicholas I's policies reflected his high regard for the military, service to the state and his need to keep order and stability in reaction to the Decembrist revolt. He was also deeply influenced by the rather conservative Uvarov who espoused a conservative military nationalism (*narodnost'*)[101] founded on the troika of orthodoxy, autocracy and *narodnost'*.[102]

Intellectuals such as Herzen wanted Russia to redefine and reinvent itself apart from the mold of Europe. For them Russia had to demonstrate its independence from Europe and its ability to govern itself as a Russian Slavic country. Largely turning away from the Westward policies and mindset of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, by the 1830s, Herzen saw Europe and European Russia as devoid of morals and of imagination. The maintenance of the inhumane policies towards the peasant population was discussed at the highest levels with exiled Decembrists and Russian intellectuals abroad having the most influence. Representing the positive and redeemable qualities of Siberia were intellectuals such as Alexander Pushkin and Herzen, remarkable

---

[100]Ideologist and historian Mikhail Pogodin quoted in David MacKenzie and Michael Curran, *A History of Russia, the Soviet Union and Beyond*, Fourth Edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993), 366.

[101] Florinsky, 799-800.

[102]See Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959).

representatives of Russian literati and high culture.[103] Pushkin, who communicated with friends exiled in Siberia and with experts on Siberia, expressed a desire to write an epic poem about the vast territory and what it meant for the Russian nation. According to Bassin "The appeal of Siberian history proved infectious for no less a literary giant....The great poet was attracted by the charisma of the Cossack conquerors of Siberia, whom he saw as courageous, almost superhuman, figures embodying the glory of Russian national history."[104] Pushkin and other writers of his day romanticized Siberia, putting a very positive and heroic light on the Russians who settled there, and, they believed, worked so courageously and tirelessly to civilize the Natives, administering such a vast continent and surviving the forces of wild nature. The regard for Ermak and the Cossacks who claimed territory for the Russian Tsars took on a very different image from that depicted by Muller just one hundred years before.

Herzen's interest in Siberia was directly connected to his political activities. He saw Siberia and its lack of a history of enserfment as a sign of purity and hope within a corrupt Russia that existed on revenue from slave labour. In Siberia, which Herzen only knew from afar from the accounts of others, and thus from his own imagination of what it must have been like, was the future of Russia. In Siberia, all good things about Russian culture, morals and people had escaped the distortions of Tsarism and serfdom, and had been preserved.[105]

---

[103] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1993) and Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[104] Bassin, 781. Pushkin was enamoured with the pastoral life and people. He was especially influenced by the "Decembrist catastrophe," leading him to write poems about the strength of the Russian soul and identifying with the heroism of the Russian people. In Siberia, Pushkin found hope even in the darkest bowels of the earth. A.S. Pushkin, *Sochineniia* D.D. Blagov, ed. 3 Volumes (St. Petersburg, 1958), 1: 38, 236.

[105] See Bassin.

Myths developed around Siberia in relation to Russia, which would later be espoused by Siberian Natives themselves.[106] While for European Russia it was the myths about connections to Kievan Rus', a Tatar Yoke, and being the Third Rome,[107] in Siberia myths formed around the figure of Ermak, the purity of Natives because of their proximity to nature, and the savageness of Natives because of the same. As Edward Keenan argues, the Russian national myths that emerge from Russian and Western scholars alike shape the way in which Russia makes decisions on domestic and foreign policy and determine how others regard Russia, how others make or adjust policies in relation to Russia. The same could be said for what emerges from the myths and images drawn about Siberia and its peoples in the late nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries.

Russian intellectuals caught up in the Romanticism of the day and searching for an identity turned to Natives not simply for an "other" in juxtaposition to themselves. Herzen, in particular, sought a way out of the decadence and corruption of serfdom that defined the social and economic order in European Russia. Regardless of how much these romantic idealists of the nineteenth century attempted to exalt the Natives and see in them a certain high culture, in their songs and in their ceremonial costumes, many were reviled for their lifestyle. Yet, "the native might be rebuked for eating rotten fish, abusing his wife, and killing his elderly parents, but he absolutely had to be praised for his simplicity, generosity, and stoicism."[108]

---

[106]This is evident in Vladimir Sangi, "Vernut' prava khoziaevam zemli," *Izvestia*, 12 July 1990, Yuvan Shestalov, "Khanty. Mansi. Kto my?" *Sterkh: etnos, religiia, kultura*, no. 1 (1993): 4-5 and Gennady Raishev, *Khanty Legendy* (Leningrad, 1991).

[107] Edward Keenan, "On Certain Mythical Beliefs and Russian Behaviors," in *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, S. Frederick Starr, ed. (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

[108]Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 79.

This is not to say that the Russian romantics, intellectuals and scholars did not attempt to transform the Native. They did. While they were children of nature, they could also be better representatives of Russia. Russians were especially repelled at how Native women were treated within tribal clans and, indeed, how Native women conducted themselves. It appeared that in many of the indigenous groups, women were treated as no better than chattel, labourers within the tribal clan and family organization. Native women also did not bathe regularly nor did they conduct themselves in the same feminine manner as their Russian counterparts. That women worked as hard as men, were as dirty as men and cared little for hygiene or fineries shocked many who came to Siberia and attempted to change such practices but without much success. Failure to influence such changes may be attributed to the reality that the Russian administration itself did not regard Native women as the equal of Native men. Only the Native male who paid tribute was valuable to the Russian administration in Siberia.[109]

As the century was drawing to a close, and Russia was industrializing and building a railroad across Siberia, it was evident that Natives too were changing. Even in the regions the Trans-Siberian railway did not cross, in the territories of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, Natives had adapted to new trading practices. The fur trade had lost its prominence early in the nineteenth century so other industries were sought and exploited. Natives learned to lease or rent lands to Russian peasants, rivers and lakes to Russian fishermen and to act as guides for mineral prospectors. Natives became more astute in doing business with Russians and began profiting when they could if only to stave off starvation and complete destitution brought on by the loss of their traditional economies. According to Iadrintsev whose writing is dejected and imbued with great romanticism about how the "alien" should live, "the alien yielded to the

---

[109] Ibid., 103.

temptation....Traditional notions have changed, old honesty and trust have disappeared....The tribes that used to be remarkable for their ingenuous irreproachable morality, have lost their childlike purity and are now demoralized."[110] Iadrintsev is obviously writing from a point of view sympathetic to traditional notions of Natives' roles and lifestyles. He completely ignores the reality that aboriginal peoples in Siberia and elsewhere constantly adapt to changing environments and circumstances. That Natives in Siberia had learned to profit from their unavoidable interaction with Europeans attests to agency over their own lives and how they chose to cope with European colonial presence on their traditional territories.[111] Moreover, Deepika Bahri avers that it was not just the superior resources of the colonizer that allowed it to colonize so easily (as was the case in most of Siberia), "but it was also a function of the willingness of subjects to be colonized"[112] as Iadrintsev's observation suggests.

Christianization: *power moral*

Changes to Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets religion and spirituality were inevitable with the formidable intrusion of imperial Tsarist Russia, and then the imposition of Soviet rule over the Khanty, Mansi, Iamalo-Nenets and their territories, but the process was not always coercive. Concomitant with encroachment on their territories, these aboriginal peoples were subjected to

---

[110]Iadrintsev, "Osuzhdennie na smert' plemena," *Sibirskii sbornik*, no, 1 (1904): 21, quoted in Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 104.

[111]Said, writing over a decade after he published *Orientalism* argues, "Imperialism afterall is a cooperative venture. Both the master and the slave participate in it, and both grew up in it, albeit unequally. One of the salient traits of modern imperialism is that in most places it set out quite consciously to modernize, develop, instruct, and civilize the natives." Said, "Yeats and Decolonization," in *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*, Terry Eagleton, Frederic Jameson and Edward Said (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 74.

[112]Deepika Bahri, "What is Postcolonialism?" *ARIEL* 26, no. 1 (January 1995): 51-82.

religious conversion under the moral position that Natives required saving from their pagan and heathen beliefs, and the administrative necessity of making them subjects of a Russian Orthodox polity. Much like the colonial policies practiced by the British regarding Natives in British North America, Christianization meant assimilation into the greater non-Native, dominant society. By becoming Christians, the Natives would be more like their colonizers in belief and in worldview.

Orders from Peter the Great in 1706 and 1710 demanded that the natives be converted to the Russian Orthodox faith. For Peter, himself ambivalent towards the Orthodox Church, conversion of the Natives to Christianity meant civilizing them and bringing them into the fold of the Russian Empire. In 1706, Peter ordered the Siberian metropolitan Filofei Leshchinskii to "find their seductive false gods-idols and burn them with fire and ax them, and destroy their heathen temples, and build chapels instead of those temples, and put up the holy icons, and baptize these Ostiaks ....And if some Ostiaks show themselves contrary to our great sovereign's decree, they will be punished by death."[113] The Christianization of Siberian Natives was far from civilized. Christianization policies were characterized by the taking of children as "hostages" and indoctrinating them. Russian officials and missionaries decreed the destruction of idols and punishment through whippings and imprisonment of Natives who refused to convert. There were also mass baptisms expediting the Christianization of indigenous peoples of Siberia.[114] Among the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, mass baptisms were performed by the archbishop of Tobolsk, Leshchinskii, and thus this period was called the "epoch of

---

[113]*Pamiatniki sibirskoi istorii* 1: 413-14, quoted in Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 49.

[114]Balzer, "Ethnicity Without Power," 636.

Leshchinskii."[115] Not only was the population itself forcibly "Christianized," there were also numerous ceremonial sites that were demolished and Christian churches built on them. Shamans were harassed undermining their power and prestige among their clans and tribes, and opening the door to other kinds of leadership approved of by the Tsarist administration.[116]

Far from discouraging the Russians from their destructive drive to force Christianity on the Natives, it gave them the rationale for their "prevailing attitudes of racial superiority and 'noblesse oblige'" and "fueled the fulfillment of perceived Christian duty."[117] The Northwest Siberian Nenets kept their spiritual beliefs despite the encroachment of missionaries and their unrelenting drive to Christianize in the name of the Tsar.[118] The taking of their land and the ruthless attempts to force them into the Orthodox faith led the Khanty, Mansi, Iamalo-Nenets and other native peoples in Siberia to migrate north deep into the tundra with their idols, effigies and sacred beliefs.[119] This resistance to Russian domination attests to the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets will to protect their culture and way of life—their ethnic foundations. As the Russians' persistence to convert the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets to Christianity intensified through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries what occurred was an *apparent* acceptance of Christianity by donning crosses, but these groups continued secretly to practice their animist and shamanic beliefs throughout the 1800s.[120]

---

[115]Golovnev, "Indigenous Leadership in Northwestern Siberia: Traditional Patterns and Their Contemporary Manisfestations," 150.

[116]Ibid.

[117]Ibid., 637.

[118]Igor Krupnik, *Arctic Adaptations*, 86.

[119]Forsyth, 154.

[120]Ibid., 155.

While the policies meted out by the regime from Peter the Great onward emphasized Christianization of the Native population, the methods for doing so were not always coercive. Indeed, conversions to Christianity were rare and, at best, superficial as the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets were "motivated by tax incentives" in order to convert to Russian Orthodoxy.[121] Failure to Christianize the native peoples may be attributed both to the remoteness of many villages and to the apathetic missionaries who often did more trading with the Natives than they did proselytizing as they had to earn their living much the same way as Siberian administrators, by *kormleniye*. At the same time, Christianization of the Natives, at times, was discouraged because it entailed giving them full citizens' rights, and receiving wages in food or cash. They would no longer have to pay *iasak* which was often the only revenue for the missionaries. Because *iasak* would no longer have to be paid, fewer furs would be collected for state coffers. Missionaries would also accept bribes for turning a blind eye to shamanic rituals—still more lucrative than mere *iasak* payments.[122]

All things considered, shamanism and animism were far more useful beliefs for the Native communities than Christianity given the remoteness and harshness of the taiga and tundra. Spirits that were believed to live in totem animals or objects were far easier to identify with and appeal to when necessary. The Christian God was too far removed from the taiga and tundra, and too imbued with mysticism to have any effect on Native life. Moreover, with the exception of St. Nicholas, the Christian God could not show its power and strength like the god of wind, the god of rain and snow, the god of storms or the spirit of an ancestor embodied in a good reindeer. The persistence of beliefs in shamanism and animism among the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets was and remains rooted in the practicality of these beliefs. The persecution of Native

---

[121]Kopytoff, 115-130; Balzer, "Ethnicity Without Power," 637.

[122]Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 43.

pagan believers in Imperial Russia and later in Soviet Russia destroyed most of the shamans who were the high priests of these beliefs, and, moreover, have distorted how these beliefs are remembered today, but in small pockets of remote villages across Siberia, belief in shamans and in idols remain. Even up until 1980 ancestral idols were discovered hidden in Khanty sacred groves,[123] and while I was in Siberia in 1994, a Iamalo-Nenets family was reportedly praying to their traditional gods and idols for the health of a sick child.

Sometimes Christian figures were deemed to be appropriate. In the far North, the Iamalo-Nenets of the nineteenth century often had Christian symbols and shamanic idols displayed side by side in their homes -- figures such as St. Nicholas who was seen as the spirit of smallpox and, therefore, able to cure it were common.[124] So strong was the veneration of St. Nicholas among the Russian peasantry that the Khanty made him one of their pantheon gods to whom they offered up sacrifices. Very few Natives were baptized voluntarily because the process would entail loss of their status as *iasak*-payers and their lives as Natives with their clan and kin while still categorized as *inozemtsy*, *inorodtsy* or *inovertsy* (people of a different faith).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown a pre-revolutionary Siberian history filled with violence, change and hardship. Surveying the literature available in the West, my aim has been to illustrate the basic anthropology and history of Natives in Siberia and how sweeping Imperial policies changed who they were and how they viewed the world around them as Russian Imperial regimes defined themselves in opposition to the indigenous peoples in Siberia. By outlining the

---

[123] Balzer, "Rituals of Gender Identity: Markers of Siberian Khanty Ethnicity, Status, and Belief," *American Anthropologist* 83 (1981):850-67.

[124] Kopytoff, 124.

vast history of their tradition and culture, my aim is to reveal what the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets mean when they suggest that they want to remember and retain their traditions. Without doubt this is all but an impossibility, but in order to understand the Natives of Northwest Siberia, we must understand the history behind their claims to self-government, indigenous rights to land and their insistence on reclaiming their past.

I contend that images of Siberia and the indigenous peoples who call it home have been created and invented throughout the centuries in order to serve the needs of the Tsarina or the Tsar. These images, throughout almost four hundred years of colonial rule, vacillated between heathen and children of nature, between animal and noble savage. The stamp of identity forged on the Natives of Northwest Siberia was based on the Russian regime's desire to create an "Orient" and an "Oriental" in juxtaposition to European Russia so it could be considered part of the larger Europe. As Edward Said argues,

> Orientalism...is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, [sic] corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do).[125]

Moreover, Said also argues that "Orientalism" is more about those who create it, rather than the "Orient" itself.

---

[125]Said, 12. (Underlined emphases added.)

After the Crimean War of 1854-56 and the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, Russian nation- and state-building became even more predominant as Russia embarked on industrialization. While Natives and the land they inhabited represented all that could be good and noble about Russia, there was among the scholars who studied the aliens, such as N.M. Iadrintsev, a will to civilize the Natives if they were to be good Russian citizens. There was great ambivalence about how the state should regard indigenous peoples, and the territory of Siberia itself elicited contradictory images. For the revolutionary intelligentsia beginning with Pushkin and Herzen, it was a land of purity and uncorruptedness. For statesmen and leaders such as Mikhail Speranskii, Siberia was the laboratory for his policies on local and self-government; and for Sergei Witte it was a place to be colonized, and its natural resources, including fur, gold, iron ore, timber and its Native population, had to be exploited in order to bring much needed revenue to industrializing and nation-building Russia. In order to do this more effectively, it was clear that the Native population, under the Russian Empire, had to be assimilated into the Russian society.

Nevertheless, while the images of the Native population that persisted among the intelligentsia, the administration and the migrant population that settled there varied and were far from consistent, the Native population's experiences and reactions to Russian dominance were far from consistent also. While the outcome of imperialism and colonization was the general loss of culture, traditional economies and, eventually, language for a majority of indigenous Siberians, it is clear that they at times benefited from the interchange with traders, merchants and the government--whether this was to move away from Russian settlements, or to act as corrupt tax collectors, or Natives petitioning the Tsar for help. They were constantly negotiating their place and their rights with the administrators and the Tsar or Tsarina in colonial Russia. In other words, they were not always victims of the colonizers; rather, they attempted to adapt and accrue the most benefit from their relationship with the new and changing order ordained by Russian colonizers.

Chapter Three
From the Bolshevik Revolution to Stalinism: From Savages to Citizens?

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 heralded a new era in the history of Russia. For Russians and other ethnic groups under the banner of the Russian Empire, this new era in-the-making was based on the idealism of Marxist theory and the practicality of Leninist dictum. Bolsheviks sought to invent new traditions based on the teachings of Marx and Engels and directed by the Communist Party. The Bolshevik Revolution found the indigenous peoples of Siberia suffering from abject poverty, exacerbated by widespread economic hardship because of the First World War, and still reeling from Mikhail Speranskii's policies of 1822. Indeed, between 1700 and 1917, the population of certain peoples, including the Khanty and Mansi, declined by as much as 30 to 40 percent.[1] For the Natives of Northwest Siberia, the prospect of new legislation under a new leadership was nothing new. Their history was, by the early 1900s, filled with experiences of being administered and managed by a leadership based thousands of versts away in a place that they could scarcely imagine.

This chapter analyses the transformation of Native peoples of Siberia from tribal communities to Soviet citizens through the process of invention of a multinational communist state based on Marxist-Leninist theory. In so doing, I contend that there were two co-dependent policies that succeeded in bringing about this profound change and re-invention: Lenin's nationalities policy and the Bolshevik party's (CPSU) industrialization drive, especially under Stalin.

This chapter is divided into four major parts. First, I outline how the invention of new traditions based on Marxist-Leninist theory formed the basis for nationalities policies as they pertained to Natives of Siberia, particularly the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets. Second, I analyze how Soviet nationalities policies made its impact on the administration of the aboriginal peoples of

---

[1] Z. P. Sokolova, *Na prostorakh Sibiri* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Russkii Iazyk," 1981), 17.

Northwest Siberia. Third, I discuss the history of the Committee of the North, followed by its dissolution and Iosef Stalin's intensive industrialization policies beginning with the First Five-Year Plan in 1928. Lastly, I show how these nationalities and industrialization policies implemented so vigorously under Stalin, had both beneficial and detrimental effects on the native peoples of Northwest Siberia, eventually coming to fruition in the Gorbachev era and after, as indigenous elites use what they learned from the Soviet system to garner political power within the Soviet and then, Russian infrastructure.

Marxism-Leninism: Inventing a multinational communist state

The revolutionary dreams and utopian visions that captured the minds and hearts of European Russians, especially the intelligentsia, at first meant nothing to the economically poor and downtrodden aboriginal peoples of Northwest Siberia. They had only vaguely heard of liberation and the ensuing Civil War from their Russian neighbours and only because the theatre of war touched some of their lives. The Bolshevik Revolution brought both losses and benefits to the Natives of Northwest Siberia. What was to be liberation for the Russian peasantry and those exiled to Siberia by the Imperial regime would mean continued loss of land and loss of predominance of the indigenous populations.

Initially, loss of land was rather informal. Without law and order in the very early days of Bolshevik rule "thousands of land-hungry and just plain hungry Russian peasants moved into traditional native territories, hunting throughout the year, pillaging hunters' stockpiles of food, stealing fur animals from traps, and killing wild and domestic reindeer indiscriminately."[2] The Bolsheviks soon found that they had to establish order, and also to dispel the ignorance regarding what the coming of socialism was all about for the Northern peoples of Russia.

---

[2]Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 132.

Bolshevik administration in the Russian North and Siberia would also bring benefits and advantages to indigenous peoples that they had not known before. Soviet rule was established and education and health care were brought to the Natives. It was in bringing in these modern and modernizing institutions to the taiga and tundra that the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets would be introduced to Soviet citizenship.

The invention of "political" traditions by the Bolshevik party led by Lenin was considered and calculated and "largely undertaken by institutions with political purposes in mind."[3] However, as Hobsbawm contends, the invention of these new political traditions required massive "broadcasting" to a population that was *willing and ready for such inventions*,[4] and, in the case of the new Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, such directives. Indeed, by the early 1930s, even in the remote Siberian North, the promises made by the Bolsheviks were readily accepted and adopted by some Natives.[5] The creation of new public holidays, revolutionary and Civil War heroes, the worker and the working class, as was the writing of Soviet songs, poetry and literature that were disseminated across the entire Soviet Union and forced upon the entire population formed the basis for the success of the newly invented traditions. While these new inventions had to be accepted by the population in order for them to succeed, it became clear that, especially after Lenin's death in 1924, "the state increasingly defined the largest stage on which the crucial activities determining human lives as subjects and citizens were played out."[6]

---

[3] Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 263-67.

[4] As I suggested earlier, Edward Said also argues that there is cooperation and a participatory relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Said, "Yeats and Decolonization," 74.

[5] See A. El'pik, "O kollektivizatsii," *Taiga i Tundra*, no. 2 (1930):38-40.

[6] Hobsbawm, 264.

As was very much the case for the new Russian Soviet Republic (established shortly after the Revolution), and for the Soviet Union (established in 1922, followed by a constitution in 1924), as Hobsbawm suggests in his general discussion of invented traditions, "the 'national economy' was the basic unit of economic development."[7] This economic and, I contend, political development went hand-in-hand with the education of the population on a state- and nation-wide basis which turned Siberian Natives of the USSR from "savages to citizens"[8] in the same way that the French Revolution turned "peasants into Frenchmen,"[9] helped along by a great deal of persuasion through education and propaganda, and, failing that, coercion.

The Soviet regime, especially after 1928 and the end of the NEP, was mercenary in its education of the Natives in the *lingua franca*--Russian--, inciting the Natives to build socialism defensively against capitalist enemies and building communication and transportation infrastructures[10] to facilitate the breakdown of barriers between remote villages in the Siberian North. To make this less onerous for Party and government workers in the North and Siberia, the Soviets strongly encouraged and induced nomads to settle in towns and villages closer to Soviet administration[11] very much as Speranskii and his 1822 Law Codes attempted to do. Settlement went hand-in-hand with the transformation of

---

[7]Ibid., 264.

[8]See Iuri Slezkine, "From Savages to Citizens: The Cultural Revolution in the Soviet Far North, 1928-1938," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 52-76.

[9]Hobsbawm, 264. See Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

[10]See M.P. Krasil'nikov, "Piatletka i rabochie kadrii Sovetskoi Azii," *Sovetskaia Aziia*, no. 1-2 (1931): 227-261.

[11]By 1934, half of the indigenous population in Siberia were nomadic or not settled, but for some peoples such as the Iamal-Nenets, the proportion was much higher at 94 percent. Forsyth, 297-98. See also, E. Kantor "Problema osedaniia malykh narodov Severa," *Sovetskiy Sever*, no. 3-4 (1934): 3-9.

peasants to proletarians, and was particularly intense as traditional economies were collectivized.

While the Soviet government's argument for settling nomadic peoples was to be able to provide better health care, education and amenities, in reality this was an attempt to turn indigenous peoples across Siberia into industrialized and modern members of the Soviet state. Whereas in the past, the settlement of Natives made the collection of fur tribute and taxes more convenient for the state, industrialization and modernization was essential for turning Natives into *Sovetskyi narod*, into proletarians, workers necessary for the success of the socialist experiment. The campaign to collectivize agriculture and to industrialize Native economies would reach its apogee in the early 1930s, as Stalin accelerated the process of bringing Marxism-Leninism to the everyday lives of northern indigenous peoples across the Soviet Union.

While Hobsbawm argues that nineteenth-century politics in Europe was "nation-wide politics,"[12] the same may be said for the new USSR as Stalin and the Bolshevik Party were attempting to form a state--new political and social organizations based on Marxism-Leninism. As the USSR developed into a nation-state supported by a population politicized by organizing and mobilizing for revolution,[13] "state, nation and society converged."[14] While the European societies and polities that Hobsbawm describes negotiated with their citizens regarding rule and government, this was much less so in the Soviet context where society was compelled through coercion and terror to abide by the mandate of state and nation, especially after Stalin firmly consolidated power in the late 1920s.

---

[12]Hobsbawm, 264.

[13]See Diane Koenker and William G. Rosenberg, *Strikes and Revolution in Russia, 1917* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) and Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1978).

[14]Hobsbawm, 265.

Lenin's Nationalities Policy

Lenin's ideas regarding nationalism and nationalities policies were far from set and rigid. Like policies that emerged during the revolution and afterward, Lenin's thinking on what to do about the many different nationalities and ethnic minorities within boundaries of the Russian Empire changed over time. Lenin adhered to Stalin's 1913 definition (formulated under Lenin's guidance) of nation and nationalism that would influence the development of his nationalities policies: "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."[15] On the face of it, Lenin's nationalities policies were forward-thinking, liberal and democratic. Indeed, national self-determination was at the core of Lenin's nationality policy. Lenin contended that once socialism had been achieved nations and ethnic minorities would not have reason to declare self-determination. Nationalism, the Bolsheviks believed, only existed in the capitalist stage of development which socialism would eradicate bringing in internationalist ideas advanced by the proletariat class.

Lenin declared in 1916 that "victorious socialism must necessarily establish a full democracy and consequently not only introduce full equality of nations but also realize the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination, i.e., the right to free political separation."[16] Lenin's rationale was that in keeping with socialist tenets of liberating the oppressed, socialist parties must "liberate the enslaved nations and build up relations with them on the basis of a free union."[17] Lenin

---

[15]Iosef Stalin, "The Nationalial Question and Social Democracy," *Prosveshchenie*, nos. 3-5, 1913 (English translation, "Marxism and the National Question," in J.V. Stalin, *Works*, Volume II (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), 307.

[16]V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 22 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 143.

[17]Ibid.

also strongly guarded against Great-Russian chauvinism from which "other nationalities of Russia" had to be defended.[18]

For a time, after the Bolsheviks had declared power over the old Russian Empire, they attempted to put policy into practice. Lenin and his party were pragmatic. They knew that they had to consolidate power, including in the borderlands, where many local leaders were trying to establish governments independent of the old Russian regime. In order to do so, the Bolsheviks declared support for self-determination and secession so that they could gain support from the borderland populations against the encroaching armies of the counter-revolutionary Whites. Furthermore, as Walker Connor suggests, the Bolsheviks hoped that the promise of self-determination would deter the non-Russians from seceding and bring others who had declared independence back into the fold.[19]

The Bolsheviks were not completely naive about self-determination as the basis of nationality policies. They were likely aware that self-determination and secession were real possibilities that oppressed nations would take advantage of. Therefore, by March 1919, the Bolsheviks were already qualifying the definition of self-determination that eventually was adopted as policy:

> The All-Russian Communist Party regards the question as to which class expresses the desire of a nation for separation from a historical point of view, taking into consideration the level of historical development of the nation, i.e., whether the nation is passing from medievalism toward

---

[18]V.I. Lenin, "On the Question of the Nationalities of 'Automization,'" 30-31 December 1922, trans. and ed. Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia: From Lenin to Gorbachev* (Hanover and London: The University Press of New England, 1993), 119.

[19]Walker Connor, "The Soviet Prototype," in *The Soviet Nationality Reader*, Rachel Denber, ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 17.

> bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy toward Soviet or proletarian democracy, etc.[20]

This stance allowed Lenin and the Bolsheviks to continue the rhetoric of self-determination while retaining the power to deny independence to any nationality or ethnic group if doing so would be deemed as harming the Soviet cause. Moreover, "the party need only proclaim that separation was not in the best interests of the toiling masses, in order to brand any move in that direction counterrevolutionary."[21]

Along with the discourse of self-determination was the promise of a federal structure. Federalism, much like the right to self-determination, carried a two-pronged utility for the Bolsheviks. As Pipes writes in his influential work, *The Formation of the Soviet Union*,

> under the circumstances in which it had been adopted, federalism was a step in the direction of centralization, since it gave an opportunity of bringing together once more borderland areas which during the Revolution had acquired the status of independent republics. In the second place, the existence of the Communist Party, with its unique internal organization and extraordinary rights with regard the institutions of the state, made it possible for the rulers of the Soviet republic to retain all the important features of a unitary state in a state which was formally decentralized.[22]

---

[20]"The Program of the All-Russian Communist Party," (March 1919), quoted in Connor, "The Soviet Prototype," 19.

[21]Connor, 19.

[22]Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 242.

The effects of Soviet rule on the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets Natives' social and economic organization have been profound. The two complementary policies that transformed the traditional organization of these aboriginal peoples in Northwest Siberia: Lenin's nationality policy and the industrialization policies advanced by the Soviet regime to bring its predominantly peasant and rural population into the modern and industrial era transformed their lives completely. To conform to Marxist theory, it was necessary for the Bolsheviks to create a proletariat, urban or not. Both nationality and industrialization policies intertwine, in Bolshevik form, which the new Soviet polity administered from a highly centralized government apparatus that would paradoxically espouse federalism.

Peter Zwick evinces that Lenin's concession to federalist forces were, at best, half-hearted. Lenin relented to federalism because he believed it to be a temporary necessity under Civil War conditions. The strong opposition mounted by the Georgians, as described in great detail by Pipes,[23] also forced Lenin to consider adopting federalism even if only rhetorically. Zwick contends that indeed this is what Lenin did, confident that the "federalization of the Soviet government would be counterbalanced by centralization of the party." Moreover, "as long as the state-party relationship was maintained, federalism would be a symbolic concession to nationalist feelings."[24]

Within the confines of this highly centralized Communist Party, the regime attempted to subject indigenous peoples to the same nationality policies as applied to Ukrainians, Kazakhs or Belorussians. While centralization and federalism were contradictory, so too were the policies and the practices that emerged from these ideas. For many of the non-Russian minorities in the Soviet Union, federalism under a strong all-encompassing communist party meant that certain ethnic and/or national expressions were tolerated, even promoted so

---

[23]Ibid.

[24]Peter Zwick, *National Communism* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), 48.

long as Marxist-Leninist ideology, as it would be configured and reconfigured by the leadership, was maintained and followed. For example, indigenous peoples could pursue their traditional economies under a collectivized setting, but the teaching of their respective ethnic languages would quickly fall by the wayside in favour of the dominant Russian language. Asserting in 1920 in the Russian Communist Party's newspaper, *Pravda*, that seceding from the union was counterrevolutionary, Stalin was "in effect, declaring that Bolshevism would henceforth be *Russian* Bolshevism."[25] For Stalin, it was the challenge to Soviet rule by ethnic and national interests that was most important to control, in contrast to Lenin's concern over Russian chauvinism.

Thus, despite Lenin's warnings about Great Russian Chauvinism, the nationalities policy that emerged soon after his death, under the leadership of Stalin was defined by Russian ethnicity and culture. Stalin completely subsumed his Georgian identity believing that ethnic and national self-determination would lead to the betrayal of the mandate of the Bolshevik revolution, and yet, ironically, looked to Russian ethnicity and culture as the paradigm for political, social and economic development. To have expected anything else of the Russian Soviet leaders may have been too much to ask for for they were attempting to create and invent a new society, indeed based on Marxism-Leninism, but very much rooted in the culture, traditions and socialization of the men and women who were the regime's leaders--the majority of whom were Russian and Jewish. "Adaptation took place for old uses in new conditions and by using old models for new purposes."[26] To have expected these Russian Bolsheviks to extract themselves completely from their national roots was nothing short of idealistic; perhaps even, as Pipes suggests of Lenin, naive.[27] No matter how one looks at the expectations that Bolsheviks had of themselves and

---

[25]Ibid. Italics in original.

[26]Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," 5.

[27]See Pipes, particularly Chapter VI.

their cadres far afield, there is no doubt that these Russian national sentiments that could not be legislated away shaped the way that Native peoples in Siberia were treated and ruled.

Spouting the ideals of an egalitarian society, Stalin moved to apply centralization policies in order to eliminate backwardness giving non-Russians the opportunity to catch up with rest of Russia.[28] These policies were used by Stalin as the rationale for modeling economic, political and cultural development along the same lines as European Russia.[29] Stalin made concessions to the demands of the ethnic minorities so that they supported the aims of the central government based in Russia. For example, the educational policies formulated by Stalin tolerated the right to native language training and usage. It was clear, however, that these concessions were temporary until the "backward nationalities" had been industrialized and educated enough to be able to defend socialism.[30] Nikolai Marr, the radical Georgian linguist, suggested that language was linked to productive relations and that as social and economic relations changed so too would language. Marr maintained that as socialism became more developed, a socialist language would emerge. Although Marr faced a great deal of criticism for suggesting that language changes over time according to the progress of economic relations, in the early 1930s, using Marr's theories, Stalin declared that Russian would be the international language of socialism.[31]

Also temporary were the concessions made to the policies promulgated by Lenin--self-determination and federalism. Self-determination, with the choice

---

[28]Gregory Gleason, "The Evolution of the Soviet Federal System," in ed. Rachel Denber, the *Soviet Nationality Reader*(Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 114-115.

[29]Ibid., 114.

[30]Ibid., 115.

[31]Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 250-252. For a general discussion, see David MacKenzie and Michael Curran, *A History of Russia, the Soviet Union and Beyond* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1993), 646-48.

to secede, and federalism were ways in which the new Soviet government sought to deal with very complex nationalities issues in a geographical space that encompassed varied and strong ethnic and national allegiances. Even before the October Revolution, the Soviets knew that they had to formulate a policy that would encompass the ethnic question in the Russian Empire that they believed they would inherit. Therefore, with Stalin as leader of the People's Commissar of Nationality Affairs (*Narkomnats*), the "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia" was ratified in January 1918. The document declared the equality of all peoples and the uninhibited development of national minorities. The spirit and aim of the "Declaration" would not be implemented in the North until 1922 after the Civil War was already over. By the time the Constitution of 1924 was adopted, the Bolsheviks dismantled *Narkomnats*.

A separate department was created to deal specifically with Northern minorities, recognizing that the needs of native peoples were unique, different and far more complex than those of other ethnic groups and larger nationalities. For the Bolsheviks, who subscribed to the nineteenth-century idea of progress and the Marxist ideology of stages of development, indigenous peoples had not yet evolved from the primitive and thus had to be rapidly brought to the modern era, from hunter-gatherers to proletariat. Lenin knew that for the Revolution to succeed in the North and Siberia among the Natives, the party had to take them as painlessly as possible through the stages that Marx postulated. Lenin was clear that the "backward" peoples must be helped and instructed towards the capitalist stage by the Soviet government installed in the remote regions. Lenin in 1923 asked pointedly "If a definite level of culture is required for the building of Socialism...why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then*, with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system,

proceed to overtake the other nations?"[32] This Northern department proposed to do this by creating a system of administration for indigenous peoples that was complementary to their culture and society. The department would also protect Natives from exploitation, provide food, clothing and the means of production, and manage the use of hunting and fishing grounds and reindeer pastures. The department also planned a study of these peoples to determine best how to bring them to socialism.[33]

As Terence Armstrong suggests, the department was fairly successful in fulfilling its aims. *Narkomnats'* journal, *Zhizn' natsional'nostey*, became the major source of information on the status of as well as ethnographic information on native peoples, often drawing attention to their history, and their present situation. The foremost ethnographers and scholars on the Northern peoples, V.G. Bogoraz and V.K. Arsen'yev among them, made informed recommendations to the new Soviet administration on how to formulate policy on the governance of Siberian Natives. These scholars proposed native reservations that would be inaccessible to non-Natives, and would serve to "enhance the material and spiritual development" of Natives "especially their well-being, cultural and economic conditions."[34] But others suggested that to segregate the Natives from the larger Soviet Russian community would only prolong their state of primitiveness, and that in order for socialism to fully succeed, Natives, too, had to develop alongside Russians.[35]

---

[32] V.I. Lenin, "Lenin on the Prerequisites for Socialism," in *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia*, Robert Daniels, ed. (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1993), 120-121. See also Pipes, Chapter VI.

[33] Armstrong, 66-67.

[34] "Zapovedniki dlia gibnyshchikh tuzemnykh plemen," *Zhizn' natsional'nostei* 133, no. 4 (31 January 1922): 1.

[35] Armstrong, 67.

The Committee of the North

The intellectuals attempting to better the lives of the Natives debated these issues while the Bolshevik regime implemented policies through the Committee of Assistance to the Peoples of the Northern Borderlands (*Komitet sodeystviya narodnostyam severnykh okrain*, abbreviated as the Committee of the North). Replacing the functions of *Narkomnats* in the North, the Bolsheviks established the Committee of the North in 1924. The Committee was formed on the initiative of intellectuals exiled to Siberia under the Imperial regime. With a great deal of persuasion from the Committee, the Bolshevik party allowed educated figures such as V.G. Bogoraz and L. Ya. Shternberg to be members of the Committee's executive administration, both of whom had extensive experience in the North. P.G. Smidovich, a leading CP member but without previous experience in the North or Siberia was appointed the chair of the committee.[36] Because the Commissariat no longer existed, the Committee of the North answered to the Communist Party's Central Executive Committee.

The Committee of the North modeled itself on the United States' Office of Indian Affairs[37] and determined that "the small peoples of the North" were at the stage of primitive communism, and thus had to be brought rapidly towards capitalism. These "small peoples of the North" were so called to delineate them from other aboriginal groups in Siberia who were far more plentiful in numbers and "administratively autonomous and politically self-assertive."[38] These latter groups were the Yakut, the Buryat and the Komi (Zyrian). The Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets fit easily into the category of the numerically small peoples living "primitive" lives without any sophisticated political organization or

---

[36]Ibid.

[37]Slezkine, "From Savages to Citizens," 57.

[38]Ibid.

notions of capitalist development, and for whom the Committee was formed to assist so that the Natives of Siberia could eventually help themselves.[39]

The Committee of the North lasted eleven years between 1924 and 1935 publishing its own journals: *Severnaya (Sovietskaya) Aziya* was published between 1925 and 1929 and *Sovietskyi Sever* from 1929 to 1935. The mandate of the Committee was very similar to the Northern department under *Narkomnats*--to help the Natives help themselves. The Committee proposed to help the Natives by attempting to provide such basic services as health care and education. They also wanted to revisit Speranskii's notion of giving Natives self-determination.[40]

According to the more sympathetic members of the Committee, in order to do this, it was essential to know *how* to help these rather mysterious and seemingly downtrodden peoples who lived very different lives from Russians; therefore, they had to study them. Assisting the Native Northerners and studying them had to be done concurrently rather than consecutively, however. This was not only because of the expediency demanded by the Bolshevik polity in bringing civilization to the indigenous peoples, but also because many Natives were very poor and were clearly in need. Initial attempts to learn about and assist the Northern Natives was very difficult, especially for the initially enthusiastic and well-meaning volunteers who attempted to implement the mandate of the Committee and to bring socialism to the indigenous peoples.

As Slezkine outlines, the youthful idealism and exuberance brought to the taiga and tundra by these volunteers would soon erode as these urban intellectuals found themselves having to cope without the amenities that they were used to. Having to sleep in the smoky *chums* or *yaranga*, with the intensely cold winters and the mosquito infested summers, many of these volunteers left shortly after their arrival. Most volunteers, not unlike the university-educated youth of the 19th century attempting to bring revolutionary ideas to the

---

[39] Armstrong, 67.

[40] P.G. Smidovich, "Sovietskoe stroitel'stvo. Ustroenie tyzemnikh narodnostei Sovetskogo Soiuza," *Severnaia Aziia*, no. 3 (1926): 84.

countryside, found the romanticism of studying and educating the Natives fade quickly as they witnessed and experienced the comparative filth and the harshness of their everyday lives--not at all akin to the urban lives they led back in Moscow or Leningrad.[41] The experiences of students and young intellectuals in the deep Siberian north underscored the different lives they led and the cultures to which they were socialized.

The coming of these young volunteers to the far north did have an impact on the indigenous communities. While in 1926, the literacy rate among Natives was at 6.7%, by 1933-34, it had risen to 24.9%; and 60.5% of Native children were enrolled in schools throughout Siberia. The rise of literacy of Natives was also due to the campaign to liquidate illiteracy in the North.[42] By contrast, literacy among the larger population over the age of 10 was 51 % in 1926 and 81% by 1939.[43]

Coinciding with the influx of volunteers, who were usually students of ethnographers associated with the Committee, was the introduction of the cultural bases (*kul'tbazy*) to the North. The Committee of the North proposed to establish *kul'tbazy* in large centres where, ideally, a significant number of Natives would have access to the services that they would provided. Each *kul'tbaza* in the North was, where possible, equipped with medical and veterinary services, a section for scientific research, and provide "immediate economic and cultural

---

[41]See Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, especially Chapter 5.

[42]Ia. Al'kor, "Zadachi kul'turnogo stroitel'stva na Krainem Severe," *Sovetskii Sever* no. 2 (1934): 22-35.

[43]Donald W. Treadgold, *Twentieth-Century Russia*, Eighth Edition, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995),270.

help for Natives."[44] These cultural bases ideally contained schools, museums and a place for socializing with one's neighbours and kin.[45]

Besides these social services, the *kul'tbazy* also, through the Committee of the North, served to expedite the cultural development of amateur artists, and "promote the basis for national self-determination and involve Native tribes in Soviet construction,"[46] dovetailing nicely with the aims of the Stalin government.[47] The *kul'tbazy* would, ideally, be a central focus point for Natives requiring medical, veterinary or social services they could not obtain elsewhere. The Committee hoped that because of these centrally accessible services, more people would come into the larger villages, take advantage of the services and perhaps build their lives around the bases. Moreover, the Committee and the government determined that the *kul'tbazy* would sow the seeds of civilization in the Russian northern borderlands, bringing the Natives closer to the socialist path.

Especially in the remote North and Siberia the debate over segregation and assimilation raged. However, the battle was not fought just between indigenous peoples and the Bolshevik administration, but rather among the intelligentsia and regional administrators sympathetic to the needs of indigenous peoples, the Bolshevik regime, and the peoples they were attempting to "civilize", and indeed classify. The attitude and the policies that eventually prevailed concerning the establishment of reservations were that the North needed to be colonized and developed, but that somehow this could be done without exploiting the Natives. Instead of reservations modeled on the American and Canadian examples, policy-makers opted for national districts, in

---

[44]Smidovich, ibid.

[45]Ibid. See also Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 157.

[46]Smidovich, ibid.

[47]Al'kor, "Zadachi kul'turnogo stroitel'stva," 24-25.

keeping with Lenin's vision of a federal state.[48] The idea of national districts would serve the administration well as it attempted to bring culture, politics and economic development to the population. But the divisions of territories were not self-determined: that is, the "national" territorial units were roughly what Natives peoples would have designated for themselves but were not a precise representation of their traditional land use. As with the Canadian experience, the designation of territorial units, reservations in the case of Canada and national districts in the case of the Soviet Union, did not coincide with the history of land use of Native peoples. The division of territories between reindeer herding Iamalo-Nenets and Khanty, for example, was much more flexible and fluid than how the Soviet state cartographers divided them. Some of the ramifications of these divisions are only now being discerned as issues of self-governing territories (*obschinas*) and ecological preservation are being debated among Native leaders, the government and development interests.[49]

The increasing influx of Russians into Siberia, illegally moving from the Russian heartland to find land beyond the Urals made the rationale and purpose of national districts ineffective, however. "In 1925, eighty percent, and in 1926, fifty percent of all new immigrants to Siberia arrived there illegally."[50] With the immigration of Russians to Siberia reaching massive proportions, the state, not having the political will to stop it, sanctioned it instead, facilitating the migration of thousands into the sparsely inhabited Siberian landscape. The regime allowed and then formalized the colonization by populating Siberia in the name of development and the success of the socialist revolution. Because the growing

---

[48]Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 154.

[49] A.I. Pika, and B.B. Prokhorova, *Neotraditsionalizm na Rossiskom Severe* (Moskva: Institut narodnokhoziaistvennogo prognozirovaniia Tsentr demografii i ekologii cheloveka Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk Mezhdunarodnaia rabochaia gruppa po delam korennogo naseleniia (IWGIA), 1994), 127-128, 142-154.

[50]Ibid.

proportion of Europeans in Siberia, even before there was a hint of industrial development, threatened the demarcation of national districts, the Committee of the North worked quickly to implement the policy proposed by the regime, fearing that without the national districts the degradation of cultures and numbers of the small peoples of the North, would continue unchecked.

Ironically, while the conflict between the Committee and the regime simmered regarding how to bring Natives to civilization, the two agreed that Natives indeed had to be civilized and that they had to "assist the small peoples in their difficult climb up the evolutionary ladder. Cultural progress meant getting rid of backwardness, and backwardness, in the very traditional view of the committee members, consisted of dirt, ignorance, alcoholism and the oppression of women."[51]

One of the broader mandates of the Committee was to give Natives the wherewithal and the skills to fend for themselves. Besides concentrating on social and cultural development, the Committee promoted political development and awareness among indigenous groups through the *kul'tbazy*, concerning itself with formalizing and transforming native traditional organizations into functional political structures.

The politicization promulgated by the Committee had many similarities with the Native organizational reforms proposed by Speranskii in 1822. In 1926, the Committee defined the clan as the basic unit of organization that could be politicized, leading administrators to form clan-based "native soviets" as political organizations in the North.[52] The central idea was to allow Natives a certain amount of self-government. This would be done by forming clan councils, but in the Soviet case, clan soviets were created. The political education of the indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia was rooted in Marxist-Leninist ideology

---

[51] Ibid., 155-56.

[52] Armstrong, 68.

and was meant to make Natives aware of the struggle of creating a socialist state and their place in it.

These measures were undertaken in a relatively liberal period in Soviet history, under the New Economic Policy. It was a time when issues of ideology and policy were debated among the political elite of the new Soviet Union. While Preobrazhensky and Nikolai Bukharin debated various options regarding economic and industrial development, whether to transform the largely peasant economy quickly or gradually preoccupied the highest levels of government in the Soviet Union. This changed towards the late 1920s as Stalin ascended to the height of power of the Communist Party and NEP was abolished in favour of his Five-year Plans.

The industrialization policy of the Bolsheviks soon after the Revolution of 1917 was to transform the native peoples of Siberia from "the foraging and herding cultures and economies of these groups from archaic forms to socialist forms."[53] Schindler also contends that it is the focus of Marxist-Leninist theory, Soviet policy and Soviet ethnography on socioeconomic factors that defines this transformation. Schindler argues that

> The "objective laws of economic development" break down ethnic barriers, by eliminating national inequalities. The slow rate of ethnic change can be directly traced to the general stability of cultural phenomena. Cultural traditions are seen as responsible for the slow rate, or even failure, of modernization among indigenous peoples.[54]

In addition, ethnic policy was based on Lenin's writings on the non-capitalist path of development. The Party believed that with a great deal of propaganda and education on the politics of Marxism-Leninism, it would be possible for the

---

[53]Debra L. Schindler, "Theory, Policy and The Narody Severa" *Anthropological Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (April 1991): 68-79.

[54]Ibid., 70.

aboriginal peoples of the North to skip the stage of capitalism prior to communism.[55] In order to achieve these aims, Schindler avers that the Soviets have had to concentrate on four major policies in the North:

> ...the creation of a 'modern,'...urban-industrial settlement system; collectivization of the indigenous production economy; development of natural resources and the industrial development of other branches of the economy; and the introduction of the indigenous population to and their incorporation in "modern" (Russian) society.[56]

The result of the Russification and Sovietization of the Native peoples was to transform and reinvent their respective cultures, ethnicity and way of life in order to fit into the mold of Soviet citizen.

By far the most effective way of molding indigenous peoples into Soviet citizens was to provide them with education. Education was the most efficient means of ensuring the colonization and transformation of the peoples of the North's assimilation into the dominant uniform culture--Soviet, speaking the Russian language. While the *kul'tbazy* introduced the majority of indigenous minorities of the North and Siberia to Soviet administration and culture, it was Stalin's policies that brought Soviet education on a more universal and wider scale to northern Native peoples. Educating the various peoples of the North did not only mean introducing them to schools and a Soviet type of education, it also meant educating them in the politics and economics of Marxism-Leninism. Again, the formal and universal education that Stalin introduced coinciding with

---

[55]Ibid. The bypassing of the stage of capitalism on the road to communism was a major problem for the Bolshevik regime as it tried to rationalize the revolution in Russia which did not have a capitalist industrial society necessary for a Marxist revolution to be realized.

[56]Ibid.

his collectivization policies extended and expanded the work of the *kul'tbazy* by building schools and boarding schools in the larger centers of the North.[57]

Because indigenous peoples held a place in Soviet policy-making that designated them as different[58] from other ethnic groups, especially Russian, they were considered to have no culture. The government, with the help of the Committee of the North published textbooks in the Natives' languages in Latin script. Introduced in 1931, this was meant to educate Natives in the vernacular so that until 1937, school primers, books and even some newpapers and circulars were written in various Native languages such as Nenets, Evenk, Even, Chukchi, Eskimo, Mansi and Nanai.[59] For other languages such as Khanty, Nivkh and Selkup, grade school primers were published. In many of the other Native languages, not much had been produced and by 1937, realizing the cumbersomeness of teaching the Native languages in Latin script and Russian in Cyrillic, the government opted to eliminate the Native language publications and classes in favour of Russian.[60] This policy coincided with the dissolution of the Committee of the North in 1934, and its replacement with the *Glavsevmorput'*

---

[57]"Obraztsovie natsional'nie shkoly v severnykh nats. okrugakh i raionakh: Meropriatia po kul'tstroitel'stvu na Severe," *Sovetskii Sever* no.1 (1933): 84-131; Al'kor, "Zadachi kul'turnogo stroitel'stva," 22-35; A. Bazanov, "Vogul'skie [Mansi] Deti," *Sovetskii Sever*, no. 3 (1934): 93-96.

[58]G. F. Debets, "O novykh klassifikatsiak ras Severnoi Azii," *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia* nos. 3-4 (1930): 213-218. Debets, in traditional anthropological fashion, classifies various indigenous peoples of Soviet Asia (Siberia) within the parameters of craniology, nose shape, language, hair, eye colour, and skin colour, and compares them with other Asians and indigenous peoples in America. That the article was published in one of the journals of the Committee of the North suggests that the exercise was not for purely scientific study, but likely used by the government and the Committee to set indigenous peoples apart from the larger population.

[59]Al'kor, "Zadachi kul'turnogo stroitel'stva," 22.

[60]Forsyth, 284-286.

(the Central Agency for the Northern Passage).[61] *Glavsevmorput'* did not want to have anything to do with northern peoples after 1938, concentrating primarily on the management of northern waterways and transportation. Thus, northern Native peoples were left with no administrative institutions until 1957. It was also the contention of Stalin and his regime that northern Natives had sufficiently bridged the centuries of development to be treated like other citizens of the Soviet Union and should contribute the necessary means to rapidly industrialize the country, especially Siberia.[62]

Collectivization of Traditional Economies: making Natives into proletariats[63]

The Great Transformation was a solidification, indeed the ratification of the Bolshevik Revolution, whereby Stalin, with the support of the CPSU created and maintained a new socialist society. Arguing that NEP was a betrayal of the Bolshevik Revolution, Stalin turned a different direction, putting a halt to NEP and implementing a highly centralized, planned economy based on collectivization of agriculture and intensive industrialization. While the economic and political environment that ensued soon after Stalin's rise to leadership of the Soviet Union was austere and ruthless, early in the 1930s, the central government was compelled to create policies sensitive to the ethnic minorities

---

[61] O. Iu. Shmidt, "Nashi Zadachi v 1936 godu," *Sovetskaia Arktika*, no. 3 (1936): 28-43. Shmidt explains the duties of Glavsevmorput', not surprisingly emphasizing how the organization facilitates communication and transport of goods and information through the North.

[62] See Bruce Grant, "Siberia Hot and Cold: Reconstructing the Image of Siberian Indigenous Peoples," in *Between Heaven and Hell: the Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*, Galya Diment and Iuri Slezkine, eds. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Yuri Slezkine, "From savages to citizens: the cultural revolution in the Soviet Far North, 1928-1938," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1992):52-76.

[63] Native peoples were forced to work in *kolkhozes*, transforming hunting, fishing, reindeer herding and gathering into factory-like or industrial settings. The purpose was to turn them into workers, and therefore members of the proletariat.

under Soviet rule. Gertrude Schroeder asserts that the vastness of Soviet territory and the multiplicity of ethnic groups and nationalities made for difficult and intricate economic policy-making processes because the central government was obligated to structure economic policies that accounted for the uneven development from one part of Russia to another. The Stalin government also took into account the differences in political outlook while at the same time making sure that the centrally planned economic policies were being implemented.[64] Adhering to these considerations proved difficult for the administration as it attempted to introduce and establish a socialist economy and society that was ideally to be highly industrialized in an environment that was based on a rural economy. The primary aim was to bring industrialization to the masses but in order to appease the minority ethnic voices, collectivization and industrialization were permitted to take on traditional ethnic characteristics. This was true for the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets whose traditional economies were collectivized (partially depending on accessibility), progressing towards Stalin's design of making the northern peoples into proletariats and bringing socialism to every corner of the Soviet Union.[65] In other words, the Soviet government did not coerce Native peoples to work in factories in cities or in mines away from their national districts and villages.

As Alec Nove argues, the Great Transformation initiated by Stalin and supported by members of the Soviet government and Party was to be spontaneously seized by the masses but because "there was no kind of inquiry or prior warning, the events that followed were both confused, and above all, ill-prepared."[66] Confusion and disorder were evident especially in the major

---

[64] Gertrude E. Schroeder, "Nationalities and the Soviet Economy," in *The Soviet Nationality Reader*, Rachel Denber, ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 261.

[65] "Kolkhoz ' Krasnaia zvezda'," *Sovetskii Sever*, no. 1 (1933): 105-108; Bazanov, 110; Ia. Koshelev, "V Iamal'skikh Tundrakh," *Sovetskii Sever*, no. 5 (1934): 86-91; V. Andreev, "Osvoenie kormovoi bazy Iamalskogo olenevodstva," *Sovetskii Sever*, no. 3 (1934): 63-67.

[66] Nove, 153.

agricultural regions of the Soviet Union, but also persisted in the North and Siberia compounded by cross-cultural misunderstandings and major language barriers. Moreover, as Schindler, and F. Douglas Whitehouse and David S. Kamerling contend, "Soviet regional policy in Asiatic Russia has been guided by consideration of the frequently overlapping factors of ideology, strategy and economics" with the effects greatest in the period before the Second World War.[67]

By the time that the regime initiated Stalin's policies of collectivization in the North and Siberia, there were already many Natives from West to East who believed in the promises of the Soviet state and the benefits that they would be given if they were dutiful members. Hence, when Stalin decided to undertake collectivization and industrialization in the vastness of Siberia, he found amongst the indigenous populations willing servitors of the Soviet communist state that he was attempting to create and maintain. As willing participants in the collectivization and industrialization process, some Natives would eventually gain status among the Russians who outnumbered them in the large urban centres, and eventually the villages. More and more would be educated and be faithful members of the Communist Party.[68] Indeed, even the folklore of the Nenets incorporated the so-called benefits of the Soviet system to their lives in the north.

> At one time in the polar sea,
> At one time in the polar sea
> We calloused the palm of our hands.
> Now, during our soviet power,
> We, without any oars, travel on the polar sea.
> During our soviet power

---

[67]F. Douglas Whitehouse, and David S. Kamerling , "The Asiatic RSFSR," in *The Economics of Soviet Regions*, ed. I.S. Koropeckyj and Gertrude E. Schroeder (New York: Praeger, 1981), 239.

[68]V.F. Tabelev, "Na Iamalskom Severe," *Sovetskaia Arktika*, no. 7 (1936): 11-23.

We Nenets have it good,
We Nenets have it good.[69]

Nevertheless, the Party work in the far north was much more onerous than it was in the centre.[70] There was a degree of resistance especially since many indigenous traditions did not allow women to participate in the decision-making processes of the kin groups or communities.[71] As Slezkine argues, the participation of Native women in the meetings of local soviets was not welcomed by Native men who often chose not to attend the meetings if they knew that women would be there.[72] But the regime would use Native women to civilize the Native population by first appealing to women to keep their children, husbands and households clean. Then women were invited to participate in Party work in the local soviets and the *kul'tbazy*.[73] Iamalo-Nenets women were encouraged also to maintain cultural bases so that the local population would have a place to meet about such issues as reindeer herding, collectivization and the sovkhoz. Foremost in the campaign to civilize was education. The use of women for state interests would escalate to imploring women to bring their children to schools so that they could be educated, and no longer live in primitive conditions. Girls in particular were encouraged to leave the *chum* and to go to school. In an article by A. Basanov on Mansi children, he chronicles the life of Mansi girls who described how, before Lenin and Stalin,

---

[69]Viacheslav Tonkov, "Iz Nenetskogo Fol'klora," *Sovetskaia Arktika*, no. 11 (1936): 64.

[70]S. A. Bergavinov, "Partiinie organizatsii Krainego Severa," *Sovetskaia Arktika*, no. 12 (1936): 54-62.

[71]Slezkine, "From Savages to Citizens," 68.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Tabeley[illegible]7-18; Bazanov, 94-95.

they were occupied only in household chores and duties, in how to cook and sew clothes. After the coming of the Soviets, however, there were more opportunities for all to *become* "pioneers, komsomols, communists, working class people."[74] The regime argued that these activities were important not just for the development of the Soviet Union as a nation, but also so that Natives could foster their own middle-rank technical personnel and their own intelligentsia.[75] Interestingly, in the same article by Basanov, he suggested that all a Mansi father wanted was for his son to be a hunter.[76]

For the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, severe encroachment into their territory and their lives by the Soviets began in the early 1930s. The tendency of the Soviet regime was to bring in trained technicians from European Russia to industrialize Siberia, and the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets were still affected by centrist policies as their hunting, fishing and reindeer breeding activities were collectivized. However, for many, collectivization was not disruptive and meant working with family members in small teams; but for others, especially the fishermen, collectivization meant that they were placed in brigades of five to eight men who were from various ethnic groups.[77]

Collectives were organized at river inlets, with many villages organized around one centre. What the Soviets hoped, according to Balzer, is that most of the outlying villages would die out because of depopulation with the youth being attracted to the Russian luxuries of money and vodka.[78] This was also a convenient way for the government to settle Northern indigenous peoples more

---

[74]Basanov, 96.

[75]"Stalinskaia Konstitutsiia i rabota na Krainem Severe," *Sovetskaia Arktika*, no. 8 (1936):3-7.

[76]Ibid., 93.

[77]Balzer, "Ethnicity Without Power," 638.

[78]Ibid.

centrally making it convenient (theoretically) to deliver services such as medical care, education, cultural socialization, and to engage in politicization, agitation and policy implementation in very remote regions of the North and Siberia.[79]

The lands on which the collectives were situated were the traditional patrilineal clan territories of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets. They were subsequently taken from the peoples in the name of communal property. As late as 1983, the Soviets were still acquiring territory from the Khanty elders who, when they died, would have to pass the land on to the Soviets rather than their rightful heirs.[80]

Also of concern to policy-makers was the establishment of an industrialized population of the north with the aim of training northern Natives on how to be and act like good Soviet citizens. This meant that as Soviets, Natives had to promote the aims of the state, namely nation- and state-building. For the Soviet Union of the 1930s, especially in the latter part of the decade, this was characterized by rapid development of people and resources. As I argued earlier, by the mid-1930s, the Soviet government was becoming less tolerant of national and ethnic differences leading to Russification of the education system and to the training of local cadres in political work along Soviet lines. The regime "civilized" Natives without heeding the cultural and traditional differences that set apart the Native population of the North and Siberia.

Conclusion

Something else happened along with economic transformation--social and cultural transformation. Natives were eventually collectivized, working in brigades of fishers, hunters and reindeer herders throughout the north, and attempting to fulfill quotas that often went against the natural and traditional

---

[79]Tabelev, passim.

[80]Ibid.

patterns of their economies. With the Russification policies, in conjunction with collectivization and industrialization of the indigenous population, they would be turned into Soviet men and women working for the state. The most striking impact of these policies, seen today, in most of the Khanty and Mansi I interviewed is that none of them speak their Native languages fluently or remember myths and songs taught to them by their parents and grandparents when they were children growing up in the 1930s and 1940s. Sovietization was a nationalist policy; that is, the Soviet regime favoured Russian nationalism privileging the Russian language and tradition over any of the other languages and traditions in the Soviet Union.

Ironically, however, as Ronald G. Suny suggests, what Sovietization inadvertently did was to promote nationalism and ethnic affinities other than Russian or Soviet, and "authorized ethnicity as an alternative mode of oppositional expression."[81] By creating national districts (mapping, as Anderson would aver), by allowing collectivization of traditional economies, by attempting to overcome the differences between nations and ethnic groups through internationalization (albeit by favouring Russian language and culture), the regime created the possibility for national mobilization.[82] This, indeed, is what we are finding today among indigenous peoples in Siberia.

---

[81] Ronald G. Suny, *Revenge of the Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press,1993), 126.

[82] Ibid.

Chapter Four

Oil and Gas Development: A Road of Discord

The most significant event in Siberia, during World War II and after, was the remarkable influx of Russians into the region. With the evacuation of families to Siberia during the war, the industrial workers required for the armaments industry and prison inmates, the non-Native population of Siberia increased tremendously signaling the complete immersion of the Native population into the greater European Slavic population. In Northwest Siberia, the non-Native population increased as much as five times, with the indigenous population in Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskii falling from almost a fifth of the total population in 1959 to less than 4%, at the beginning of the 1990s.[1] Indeed, as Forsyth argues, "the war increased their assimilation and integration into the political and social network of Soviet Russian society to a point from which there was no going back."[2] While the exigencies brought on by the war increased the non-Native populations in all of Siberia, industrial development augmented and maintained this non-Native population growth after the war and particularly after the early years of economic recovery. Speaking of the country in general, Abel Aganbegian, one of the leading economists in the USSR in the mid-1980s who would later gain prominence in Gorbachev's administration, argues that economic development between 1960 and 1980 was unequaled in any other phase in the country's history.[3] In Northwest Siberia in particular, oil and gas development increased the non-Native population especially after 1965. While collectivization of Native traditional economies was already well-

---

[1]Leslie Dienes, *Soviet Asia: Economic Development and National Policy Choices* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 199.

[2]James Forsyth, "The Indigenous Peoples in the Twentieth Century," in *The Development of Siberia: People and Resources* eds. Alan Wood and R.A. French (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 86.

[3]A. G. Aganbegian, *Zapadnaia Sibir' na rubezhe vekov* (Sverdlovsk: Srednie-Ural'skoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1984), 8.

entrenched in many communities or continued to be a major policy goal by the time of Stalin's death in 1953, industrial and resource development in Northwest Siberia initiated by Nikita Khrushchev and intensified under Leonid Brezhnev would modernize and Sovietize aboriginal peoples of Northwest Siberia, including their culture, education and land. While Soviet propaganda, slogans and education were as evident in this relatively more liberal period as they were during the Stalin era, it would be the massive industrial construction that would dominate the landscape and the lives of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets.

This chapter traces the history of oil and gas development in Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union, and into present-day Russia. It examines the intensive development of oil and gas as a major source of energy, and shows how within the command economy, such development created an economic and social foundation that Sovietized and Russified the Native population leading to the loss of their language and culture, and the creation of an identity and tradition defined by their colonizers. The Soviet regime invented and controlled the direction and tenor of the government's relationship with the aboriginal peoples and the land of Northwest Siberia transplanting social, economic and cultural policies implemented earlier in other regions of the Soviet Union. Thus, I will argue, the character of this relationship between the Soviet government and the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets can be defined as one of colonizer and colonized with Natives having little or no say in the development of the land they occupied, the education of their children and the political and social infrastructure established around them. For the most part, this continues in Russia today.

A History of the Oil Industry: the Imperial Period

To understand the development of the oil and gas industry in the former Soviet Union and its effects on the Native population of Northwest Siberia, it is instructive to look at its historical background. The development of the oil industry in Russia dates back to the eighteenth century when Peter the Great

conquered Baku which was to become the major source of oil for Imperial Russia and then the Soviet Union until other sources of oil were found and exploited after 1945. As early as 1723 Peter the Great thought of transporting oil from Baku to St. Petersburg.[4] However, the Russians lost control of the area to the Persians in 1735, and did not regain control until 1806 and after the peace treaty signed in 1813.

For the most part, extraction of oil from the area was not very efficient. The wells were not dug very deep and the amount of oil extracted was minimal. With the aim of making the oil industry in Russia more lucrative, the government implemented two different types of policies from 1821 to 1917. The first, operating between 1821 and 1872, was the franchise system giving those who wanted to drill and extract oil four-year monopoly rights. This policy proved inefficient as most companies exploited their designated sites as much as they could within this four-year period, giving them no incentive to explore and drill for long-term gain. The loss to the Russian government was significant as certain areas were exploited and depleted and were not replaced with other potential sources. The second, was the public auction system between 1872 and 1896. It encouraged competition but divided drilling sites into such small areas that it made exploration and extraction less efficient.[5] Nevertheless, this new policy increased the oil drilling and production activity. With this change in energy policy, the overall production of oil in Russia increased steadily, augmented by the discovery of the first oil gusher in Baku in the early 1870s.[6]

The production of oil, its refinement and sale would be enhanced by foreign investors who introduced new technologies and provided new markets for the Russian petroleum industry. From the 1870s to the early 1890s oil

---

[4]Marshall I. Goldman, *The Enigma of Soviet Petroleum: Half-Full or Half-Empty?* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), 14.

[5]Robert E. Ebel, *Energy Choices in Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994), 16.

[6]Goldman, *The Enigma of Soviet Petroleum*, 14.

production rose from over a million to over two million tons annually. Despite such a remarkable increase, Russia was still importing a significant amount of kerosene from the American company Standard Oil. The major reason for such imports was the problem of transportation. Transporting petroleum from Baku to St. Petersburg and other populated regions in north and central European Russia proved to be a difficult undertaking. This dilemma was solved in 1878 when foreign investors, the Noble brothers, constructed a pipeline to an oil refinery and then to the Caspian Sea from where tankers and barges transported petroleum northward on the Volga. Tsaritsyn (Stalingrad, currently Volgograd) was made a centre for oil storage. The completion of the railway in the early 1880s ensured the possibility of exporting oil from the Russian Empire or transporting oil to the borders. By 1881, oil was transported from oil storage facilities in Tsaritsyn, providing oil to the north even in winter when the Upper Volga froze over. This not only serviced the north's need for oil but also managed to push out Standard Oil, taking over its markets so that by 1896, imports of petroleum and kerosene were negligible.[7]

With the growth of oil production and improving transportation links between the oil fields and oil refineries in the Baku region, Russia looked to expand by exporting oil outside of Russia. Oil entrepreneurs and enterprises sought other ways to transport oil from Baku. The Russian conquest of Batum, and the expulsion of the Turks from this area made export possible through the Caucasus to the Black Sea and into the Mediterranean. Oil entrepreneurs financed by the Rothchilds would capitalize on these possibilities. The completion of the railroad assured the possibility of transport of oil outside Russia and indeed exports from Batum increased rapidly from 3,300 tons in 1882 to 65,000 tons in 1884.[8] With increased oil production and a better transportation system, Russia became a major exporter of oil rivaling Standard Oil in certain sectors. Standard Oil retaliated by dropping its prices fearful that its standing as

---

[7]Ibid., 16.

[8]Ibid, 17.

the world's largest supplier of oil would be threatened. Indeed Standard Oil had cause to worry. While incomplete data make it impossible to determine precisely which country led in exports of oil, the United States and Russia were the two major world exporters of oil, and Russia overtook the United States in petroleum production from 1898 to 1902.[9] A new oil industry policy was established in 1896, lasting until 1917. This new policy combined the auction and royalty systems with the government seeking maximum profits by first extracting an auction price and then continuing to profit by taking royalties from private investors and companies, the backbone of the oil industry in Russia. This policy promoted and ensured high profits for the government.[10]

By the end of 1901, plagued by poor extraction methods and detrimental oilfield development policies, oil production in Russia was in decline. Russian oil production would not exceed 1901 production levels until 1929. Much of this decline centred around the Baku oil fields and so new fields were drilled and other regions around the Black and Caspian Seas were exploited in order to compensate for the decline in overall production. Deeper wells were drilled also, with foreign investors using the American-made drilling system instead of the wooden Russian drilling tools that could not drill deeper that 300 feet.[11] Such methods were not enough to maintain output in the Russian oil industry, and other technological advances commonly used in the United States were not adopted by Russians. The technological backwardness of the oil industry in the early twentieth century prevented Russia from becoming competitive with oil companies based in the United States and Europe.

The central factor that led to the decline in oil production in this period was the political unrest in the Batum and Baku areas. Incited and led by such figures as Stalin, strikes beset Batum in 1901 to 1902, and oil worker strikes followed in Baku in mid-1903. The general unrest initiated by these strikes

---

[9]Ibid., 16.

[10]Ebel, *Energy Choices in Russia*, 16.

[11]Goldman, *The Enigma of Soviet Petroleum*, 19.

stunted oil production leading to a drop of over 3 million tons and cutting exports in half.[12] The oil industry in Russia would not recover until well into the Soviet period, but under Soviet rule it would suffer the same problems of policy mismanagement and transportation as during the Imperial period.

Oil and Gas Development in the Soviet Period

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 saw the production of oil plummet even further with workers demanding more say in the decision-making process. Oil companies were nationalized by the Bolshevik government in June 1918. This was followed by a further drop in oil production from 10.8 million tons in 1916 to 4.1 million tons in 1918. Nationalization generally meant the loss of investment and profits for foreign investors. Efforts by investors to regain control of assets and investments from the Bolshevik regime persisted for more than a decade, assisted by such events as the Turkish takeover of the region in September 1918 and the subsequent British removal of the Turks two months later. This latter event restored confidence in the oil industry with investors such as Standard Oil, Anglo-Persian Oil Company and Shell retaining their investments in the area. After the Civil War and once the Bolsheviks took over Baku, investments were again in a precarious and unstable economic and political climate. Western oil companies began a boycott of Russian oil. Ultimately, however, the Bolsheviks realized that they did not have the managerial skills to run the oil industry. The economic collapse that ensued after the Bolshevik Revolution and Civil War left the new Soviet Union in a desperate situation with a starving rural population and general disorder. The Bolsheviks were forced to invite and give concessions to foreign investors in order to revitalize the economy, with the oil sector benefiting from these policies. By 1930, the oil industry's revitalization was such

---

[12]Ibid., 20.

that production reached 100 million barrels annually and by 1940 it reached 223 million barrels annually, mostly from the Baku field.

Despite the success of the oil industry, assisted by foreign investment and technology, the Soviet Union's major source of energy fuel in the late 1920s was still firewood. Until the early post-World War II years, the favoured form of energy was wood, which made up 50% of fuel used in 1928, with other energy resources such as coal, shale and peat supplementing the energy needs of the developing and modernizing Soviet Union.[13] By the early 1940s, coal became prominent as a source of fuel for industry. The Soviet regime did not rely on the country's depleting reserves of oil and gas in Azerbaizhan, the North Caucasus and European Russia to fuel its industrialization. Notably, 93% of the national production of petroleum came from European Russia.[14] Moreover and expectedly, oil production, exploration and drilling for new sources of oil was hampered by the Second World War with European Russia's share of production for the USSR dropping from 92.9 % in 1940 to 83.5 % in 1945.[15] Not until 1960 did European Russia produce at the levels it was producing prior to the Second World War,[16] but by this time, the state had begun to explore other areas of oil and gas exploitation.

Even in the 1940s, the potential oil and gas reserves in Northwest Siberia were as yet unknown. Problems of transport of such energy resources as coal led policy-makers to encourage the use of locally available sources of energy in order to circumvent such challenges. Nevertheless, in the period between the First Five-Year Plan and 1960, transportation was still the major stumbling block to supplying energy fuels to the more populous and industrialized areas of the

---

[13]Robert W. Campbell, *The economics of Soviet oil and gas* (Baltimore: Published for Resources for the Future by the Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 3.

[14]Leslie Dienes and Theodore Shabad, *The Soviet Energy System: Resource Use and Policies* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979), 56.

[15]Ibid., 46-47.

[16]ibid.

U.S.S.R, therefore hindering the search for other types of energy, particularly oil and gas, in the far flung reaches of Siberia. As Robert Campbell argues, the work to transport coal "grew by more than twice as much as the energy content in coal produced," explained by the fact that there was a decrease in the energy content of coal produced and the longer distances over which coal was transported.[17] Transportation proved to be one of the most enduring problems faced by the energy sector during the Soviet period and persists to the present day. Transport of oil and gas was not as problematic as the transport of coal, but prior to the 1960s, these resources only played a minor role in the energy sector. This situation would change once oil and gas had to be transported from the Northwest Siberian plains.

Shortly after the Second World War, it was evident that the Soviet Union's demand for energy to develop its industrial sector was more than the coal industry could support. Concomitantly, supplies of oil and gas from the established oil fields in European Russia and Central Asia were becoming depleted and overexploited. The government sought new sources of energy. This search culminated in arguably one of the landmark discoveries of oil and gas reserves in the Soviet Union, leading to the exploration for and extraction of oil and gas in the Konda region, the centre of Mansi territory. The discovery of oil and gas reserves in Northwest Siberia occurred by accident when in September 1953, barges transporting rigs were delayed on the River Ob' near the village of Berezov and a test boring was made on the banks producing a shot of gas and water. Even then, the extent of the oil and gas reserves was not known.[18]

Coinciding with the first discoveries of oil and gas reserves in Northwest Siberia was a change in leadership in the Soviet Union. The leadership succession revolved around economic problems. It was evident that the highly centralized economic system imposed by Stalin weighed heavily on the future economic

---

[17]Campbell, *The economics of Soviet oil and gas*, 3.

[18]Dienes and Shabad, *The Soviet Energy System*, 57.

development of the country. As Alec Nove argues, the reasons for the necessity of economic change varied with such concerns as "the duplication of supply arrangements and components manufacture between ministries, resulting in unnecessary cross-hauls," the pervasive problem of central management usually rendering local and regional decision-making initiatives irrelevant or non-existent.[19] Moreover, the routine incertitude about supplies led ministries to look for their own sources of materials often resulting in waste and further inefficiencies.

Khrushchev eventually gained favour with his economic policy proposals aimed at remedying the dire situation of low agricultural productivity, inefficiency and the low wages paid the peasants. With this platform of economic reform, Nikita Khrushchev became First Secretary and Premier. Khrushchev succeeded in securing the leadership against Malenkov and ushered in a new era of economic and social reforms in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev inherited an economy still largely reliant on agriculture as its major industry and one that was highly inadequate and stifled by a heavy state bureaucracy. It was even admitted in 1956 that consumer goods were poor in quality and low in quantity, that housing and services were wanting and that the agriculture industry was in depression.[20]

Despite these growing problems, it was also evident that the economic and social development that had been achieved since 1917 were remarkable. The Soviet Union, while still reliant on agriculture continued to industrialize rapidly towards the end of the 1950s. By 1960, about half of the Soviet population was living in urban centres. While development and urbanization were uneven, with the Baltic states more industrialized than Central Asia and Siberia, for example, the course of development for the USSR and the Khrushchev regime was to continue the rapid industrialization forged by Stalin and to maintain its superpower status vis-a-vis the United States. In order to do so, the Soviet

---

[19]Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1969), 343.

[20]Ibid. , 323.

leadership looked to Siberia for its natural resources and energy. Supplies were waiting to be found and exploited. The numerically-small peoples of the north who thought of Siberia as their ancestral homeland opposed this policy.

Oil Development Intensifies

Khrushchev's Economic Policies intertwine with regional and nationalities politics

Khrushchev aimed to overhaul the agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy in order to make the economy generally more efficient. He decentralized economic decision-making and in 1957, introduced the *sovnarkhozy* (regional economic councils) reforms making way for more liberal policies towards the republican and regional economies. Strictly non-local enterprises were placed under these *sovnarkhozy*. The necessity for economic reform overrode the regime's exigency for strong central control. As a result, civilian industrial and building enterprises were placed under the *sovnarkhozy* and the country was divided into 105 regional economic councils subordinated to the republican Council of Ministers with *Gosplan* "responsible for general planning, the coordination of plans, the allocation between republics of key commodities," but without executive authority which rested with the all-union Council of Ministers.[21] While there seemed to be an expansion of the regions' role in the economy, Khrushchev stressed the unity and interdependence of the Soviet state. Unfortunately for the regions that did not carry the status of republic or autonomous republic, the decision-making powers afforded them by the regime were limited, especially in Northwest Siberia because it was (and remains) a major source of energy and hard currency. Under the hierarchy of matrioshka[22]

---

[21]Nove, *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.*, 344.

[22]The term "matrioshka" is derived from the popular Russian nesting dolls. Matrioshka nationalities policies suggests a hierarchical configuration with the largest outer doll (i.e. the USSR) encompassing the other levels of administrations based on nationality and ethnicity. See Figure 4.1.

nationalities policy, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets were located at the inner-most layer, and thus were given the least autonomy and control over their region. Their economies, culture and political life would remain centralized in the Russian Republic government, and under the USSR federal government.

The decentralization of the economy and the overall de-Stalinization of the society, however, allowed the *sovnarkhozy* in their various regions to establish authority over regional enterprises, favouring their own regions in the allocation of exiguous resources.[23] The effects of the *sovnarkhozy* reforms, both long- and short-term were complex and various. For the underdeveloped regions of the Soviet Union, they were a failure because the economic benefits tended to be localized hampering the equal distribution of goods across the Union. Thus, the reforms served to further emphasize the inequalities in wealth and development among the regions. Jan Ake Dellenbrant contends that

> It is noteworthy that regional differences increased during the Sovnarkhoz period, i.e., when regional interests tended to carry more weight. During this period, plans were able to give broader consideration to the interest of the particular regions with which they were concerned, so that a region's premises for economic growth assumed a greater relevance in planning. Since both natural resources and labor are unequally distributed, it is hardly surprising that regional variations increased during this period.[24]

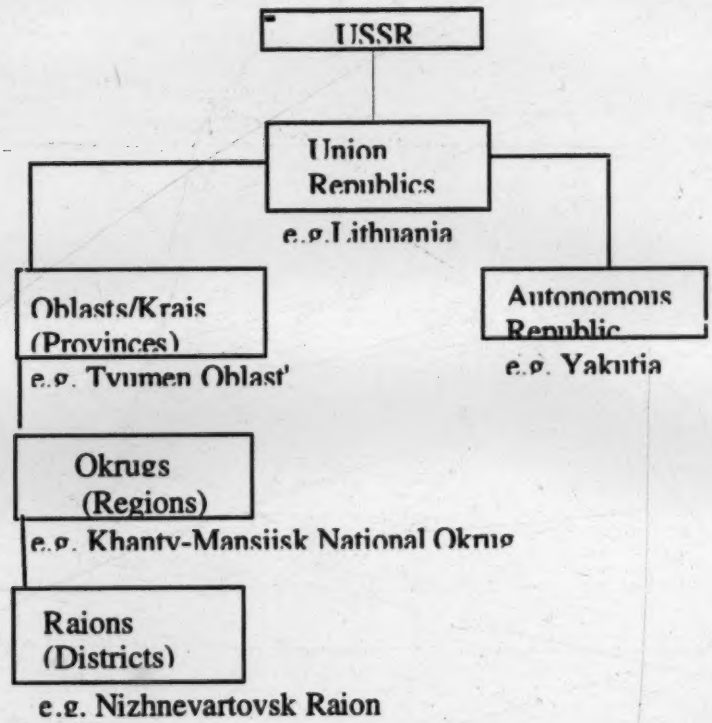
It was quite evident that the decision-making process for industrial and resource development for Northwest Siberia would be closely connected with the central government in Moscow.

---

[23] Nove, 358.

[24] Jan Ake Dellenbrant, *The Soviet Regional Dilemma* (Armonk, N.Y. and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. 1986), 49-50.

Figure 4.1 Hierarchy of Administration in the USSR[25]



[25]Adapted from Nikolai Vakhtin, *Native Peoples of the Russian Far North* (London: Minority Rights Group International, 1992), 14.

Prior to 1959, the fuel and energy economy was far from coordinated or rationalized, i.e., sectors of the industry that should have been under the same administration were under another, making for a very inefficient working system. As in other major sectors of the economy, the administration of the oil and gas industry was highly centralized with policy decision-making made by the leadership through directives from high levels of government. The central government was in charge of all the sectors of the oil and gas industry, from exploration to sale. And as with other sectors of the Soviet planned economy, the regime controlled the oil and gas industry by formulating five and seven-year plan quotas. In 1957, under the organization of industry and construction, the administration changed from branch to territory. This led to major changes in the organization of the oil industry with its components divided and placed under the responsibility and purview of several other administrators. The "planning and supervising role of the Ministry was given to the regional economic council (*sovnarkhoz*)."[26] The oil and gas industry operated through several *khozrashchet*[27] enterprises: the exploration office, the drilling company, the oil field administration, the refinery, the distribution bases, pipeline companies, construction companies, the machinery plants and the research organizations. While having independence, these enterprises and the activities in which they engaged were very much under the central executive and planning organs of the Soviet economy.[28]

Oil and gas development, in Northwest Siberia began in the 1960s. Eagerness was demonstrated not just on the oil and gas fields but also in the political arena as geologists and politicians strongly lobbied the central

---

[26]Campbell, *The Economics of Soviet Oil and Gas*, 28.

[27]*khozrashchet*: this means that enterprises had financial independence, did its own accounting and had their own bank accounts, and financed their own costs with their own profits.

[28]Campbell, *The Economics of Soviet Oil and Gas*, 26.

government to invest in the oil and gas development in Northwest Siberia.[29] The energy policy at the time also favoured oil and gas as sources of fuel, and more important, the move from west to east for exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbon fuels as the European reserves dwindled.[30] The new focus on Northwest Siberian natural resources transformed the region. It became the heart of the USSR's campaign for continued and intensified industrialization.

Social scientists F. Douglas Whitehouse and David S. Kamerling contend that regional development policy in the USSR was influenced by "frequently overlapping factors of ideology, strategy, and economics."[31] Even prior to the Second World War, the Soviets were already grappling with the concept that there should be equal development among all regions of the Soviet Union, thus signaling the development of Siberia or Asiatic Russia and other developing areas. While these policies were not always consistent and often contradictory, they set the tone for the industrial development of Siberia. This equalization policy remained a priority until Brezhnev declared in 1972 that it had been achieved (this, however, was far from being the case). This priority was enhanced by the experience and aftermath of World War II as the Soviets realized that for strategic reasons, industries were better located away from the borders of potential conflict. As such, the location and development of industries in Siberia was an ideal solution that met both ideological and strategic

---

[29]Reports from geologists and geophysicists to the Geological Department of the Tiumen' Oblast government boast of drill masters drilling 20 to 25 % deeper than the yearly plan, echoing the height of Stakhanovism in the 1930s. See, for example, Postanovlenie: prezidiuma TsK profsoiuz rabochikh geologorazvedochnykh rabot, "Protokol No. 25: Ob initsiative kollektivov burovykh brigad Tiumenskogo upravleniia t.t. Urusova S.N. i Tarasova, A. F." Moscow, 19 March 1963.

[30]Aganbegian, *Zapadnaia Sibir' na rubezhe vekov*, 23-24. Han-ku Chung, *Interest Representation in Soviet Policymaking: A Case Study of a West Siberian Energy Coalition* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), 3.

[31]F. Douglas Whitehouse and David S. Kamerling, "The Asiatic RSFSR," in *Economics of Soviet Regions* eds. I. S. Koropeckyj and Gertrude E. Schroeder (New York: Praeger Publishers 1981), 236.

concerns.[32] Yet, for the most part, especially in the development of Northwest Siberia, the impetus for industrial and resource development was economic. By the mid-1960s and the early 1970s, Soviet leaders were very cognizant of the economic potential of Siberia. As Whitehouse and Kamerling suggest, the Asiatic RSFSR "has often been called one of the world's last great storehouses of natural resources."[33]

While ideological, strategic, and economic concerns predominated in policy-making vis-a-vis the economic development of Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets territory, regard for the concerns of the aboriginal population was nowhere to be found. Supporters of such development stressed economic rather than social concerns.[34] This marked a change from the past. In a proposal drafted by the Central Committee of the CPSU, regarding the future of economic and cultural development of the far north drafted in 1956, the recommendation to extract oil from the Kondinskoye and Surgut regions occupied three lines of a twenty-five page document. The remainder was devoted to detailed recommendations regarding the need to preserve traditional economies of hunting, fishing, and reindeer-herding activities of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets in the region of Northwest Siberia.[35] The document listed fifty-eight recommendations on how to improve the lives of indigenous peoples in the Northern regions. Among these recommendations were the facilitation and support of kolkhoz and kolkhoz farmers (reindeer herders) in their acquisition of reindeer and other farm animals by lending them as much as two thousand rubles, to be paid over a 5 year period. It also ordered the

---

[32]Whitehouse and Kamerling, "The Asiatic RSFSR," 237.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Witness Aganbegian's emphasis on the benefits of oil and gas development, and how the intensification of this development has only enhanced the quality of life of the general population and therefore must continue. See Aganbegian, *Zapadnaia Sibir' na rubezhe vekov.*

[35] Prilozhenie No. 1 k postanovleniu TsK KPSS i Soveta Ministrov SSSR ot iulia 1956, "MEROPRIATIA po dal'neishemy razvitiu khoziaistvo i kul'tury v raionakh Krainego Severa i otdalennykh mestnostiakh, priravnennykh k nim." Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumenskoi Oblasti, Fond 814, Opis' 1, Delo 4113, List 26-50.

Ministry of Finance to include in the budget, starting 1 January 1957, more money for medical care, medicines and first aid for the both city and village hospitals. The document recommended that the building of the Salekhard medical school with residence spaces for 120 people be finished so that Native Northerners could occupy medical personnel jobs in the Iamalo-Nenetskii and Khanty-Mansiisk regions.[36]

By contrast, a survey of the archival documents in the Tiumen' Oblast' Government Archives between 1960 and 1964 reveals the predomination of geological reports, oil extraction projection memoranda, the physical and chemical characteristics of oil and proposals for the construction of support facilities for the anticipated oil, gas and forestry development in the Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskii National Regions.[37] In the excitement of the discovery of this most precious of resources, policy planners, government leaders, and economists were blind to the social, economic and cultural impact that such a degree of development would entail for indigenous peoples and their sacred and traditional territories. Archival materials on the Iamalo-Nenets, the Mansi and the Khanty indicate that these issues were not addressed significantly until the late 1970s as the situation for indigenous Siberians worsened. Even then, the emphasis in these documents was on how to assimilate Native Northerners better to industrial life and how to include them in the oil and gas

---

[36]Ibid., passim.

[37]See for example A.E. Mikhailov, Predsedateliu Tiumenskogo oblispolkoma "O khode vypolneniia Postanovleniia Soveta Ministrov RSFSR ot 16 Sentiabria 1964 goda No. 1166 'O merakh po okazaniiu pomoshchi v osvoenii neftianykh mestorozhdenii v Tiumenskoi Oblasti'," Gosudarstvenii Arkhiv Tiumenskoi Oblasti, Fond 814, Opis' 1, Delo 4241, 20-29; P. Shelakhin, Predsedatel' TsK Profsoiusa, "Ob initsiative [sic] kollektivov burovykh brigad Tiumenskogo geologicheskogo upravleniia t.t. Urusova, S.N. i Tarasova, A.F." *POSTANOVLENIE prezidiuma TsK profsoiuza rabochikh geologorazvedochnykh rabot*, Protokol No. 25, 19 March 1963, Moscow; and V. Karlov and S. Simonova, "PROTOKOL geologo-tekhnicheskogo soveshaniia Iamalo-Nenetskogo geologo-razvedochnogo tresta na neft' i gaz," 21 November 1964, Salekhard, just to list a few.

economy of northern Tiumen' Oblast'.[38] Also addressed in many of these documents were the accomplishments made by the state with regards to providing schools, medical care and entertainment facilities for Natives. The documents boasted of the participation of Natives in cultural agitation brigades, the success of the gas, fish, meat and fur industries, and the improvements in agricultural yields in such northern territories.[39]

Already evident in the collectivization policies under Stalin and the agricultural policies of Khrushchev in the post-World War II period was that administrators and policy-makers had very little understanding of what traditional lands and traditional economies meant for the spiritual and cultural lives of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, and indeed all other aboriginal peoples in the Russian North and Siberia. There was little or no understanding that quality of life for northern Natives was different from that of the European USSR population. As Aganbegian argued in 1984, the development of the plastics and chemical industries reliant on oil, and the energy and heating requirements provided by gas were, along with socialism, responsible for the prosperity of the Soviet state and population.[40] Aganbegian, however, was speaking for the majority of European Slavs living in cities such as Moscow, Leningrad, Tallinn and Kiev. As Leslie Dienes pointed out in the late 1980s, "over three-fourths of the *demand* for Soviet energy, as roughly for most other resources, continues to originate in these parts,"[41] emphasizing that the Soviet economy worked on the basis of a centre-periphery or metropolis-hinterland dynamic.

---

[38]See "Spravka: o razvitii economiki i kul'tury Khanty-Mansiiskogo natsional'nogo okruga Tiumenskoi Oblasti," Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumenskoi Oblasti, Fond 814, Opis 1, Delo 5911, (1977), 61-71.

[39]S. S. Lesotskie, "Spravka: o sotsial'no kul'turnom razvitii Iamalo-Nenetskogo natsional'nogo okruga Tiumenskoi oblasti za gody Sovetskoi vlasti," Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumenskoi Oblasti, Fond 814, Opis 1, Delo 5911 (1977), 58-60.

[40]Aganbegian, *Zapadnaia Sibir' na rubezhe vekov*, p 7.

[41]Dienes, *Soviet Asia*, 43. Emphasis added.

For the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets it was distressingly clear that the dominant polity--the Russians--would develop the resources and enterprises to the detriment of Native populations despite the participation of Native leaders in the Supreme Soviet, in the Academy of Sciences and in advanced education. As Terence Armstrong observes,

> most of the successful products of the northern peoples are graduates of the Institute of the Peoples of the North or of its successors. They are primarily good Soviet citizens, their indoctrination in Marxism-Leninism has been thorough, and their views on affairs beyond their personal experience are naive....Like Soviet citizens who have come to the top in other parts of the Soviet society, they owe everything to the regime, and identify themselves with it rather than with whatever national group they may belong to.[42]

As early as the mid-1960s, it was already evident that an educated and reputable segment of the aboriginal population of Siberia had co-opted the Soviet system. Interviews with present-day Native elites reflect this attitude. And moreover, many Natives are grateful to the Soviet system for bringing schools and social programmes to remote Northern villages allowing Khanty, Mansi, and Iamalo-Nenets the opportunity to attain higher education not afforded them by the Tsarist regime.[43] While co-optation was widespread and enforced by the regime, regional elites and regional national elites were able to take favourable advantage of the system, accruing a certain degree of power and

---

[42]Terence Armstrong, "The Administration of Northern Peoples: The USSR," in R. St. J. Macdonald, ed. *The Arctic Frontier* (Toronto: Universtiy of Toronto Press, 1966), 77.

[43] Interviews with the Iamal-Patomkam representative in the village of Tazovskii in Tazovskii Raion, 04 August 1994, Tazovskii; and Petr Moldanov, Chair of the National Khant Obshchina in the Surgut region, 25-29 May 1996, Prince George, B.C.

influence over regional politics and economics.[44] Indeed the emergent indigenous leaders at the fall of the Soviet state were the ones who already had a certain measure of power within the old Soviet system and Party. Local native leaders such as Petr Moldanov, V. Kogontchin, both Khanty, V.A. Robbek, an Even, Evdokia Gaier, a Nivkh, S.N. Khariuchi, a Iamalo-Nenet, are but a few examples. Some others were very prominent writers, entering the Soviet intelligentsia and belonging to the Writers' Union: Iuri Rytkheiu (a Chukchi), Iuvan Shestalov (a Mansi) and Eremei Aipin (a Khant) among them. Today, these same leaders who had fit in so well within the Soviet hierarchy are the most active in the mobilization for indigenous rights in Russia.[45]

The initial success of Khrushchev's political maneuvering and economic reform policies imbued the Soviet leader with great confidence. The discovery of new sources of energy and minerals solidified this attitude leading Khrushchev to formulate a seven-year plan from 1959-1965, emphasizing the exploitation of newly-found sources of oil, gas and other minerals. The plan drawn up by Khrushchev aimed to invest 40% of the total budget on Siberia and thus change the common practice of allocating resources to already established enterprises to save on overhead costs.[46] The seven-year plan sought to increase oil production from 113 million tons in 1958 to 230-240 million tons by 1965. Gas production was to increase from 29.9 billion cubic metres (b.c.m.) in 1958 to 150 b.c.m. by 1965. The actual production was 242.9 million tons of oil and 129.3 b.c.m. of gas in this seven-year period.[47] By 1960, oil was extracted from Shaim on the River Konda, directly in the middle of traditional Mansi territory. Mansi elderly

---

[44] Teresa Rakowska Harmstone, "The Dialectics of Nationalism in the USSR," in Rachel Denber, ed., *The Soviet Nationality Reader: The Disintegration in Context* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 391-416.

[45] A detailed account of the First Congress of Northern Minorities at which many of these leaders voiced strong concerns regarding their struggles appears in translation in IWGIA Document 67, *Indigenous Peoples of the Soviet North* (Copenhagen, 1990).

[46] Nove, *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.* 347.

[47] *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo* 1960, 210-212 and 1965, 136-139, 262, 557, 609.

painfully recall how these initial days of oil extraction overturned their everyday lives as oil drilling equipment, heavy machinery, vehicles, and oil workers converged on the region bringing with them the ill-effects of industrialization, most notably environmental degradation and alcoholism.[48] One Mansi woman whose husband had been killed while operating a motorcycle while intoxicated and whose son seems to have been an alcoholic blames oil development. She cried, "Men have to go away from the village now to work as oil men. Before we could hunt and fish nearby in the sovkhoz and men wouldn't get drunk."[49] Pika and Prokhorov, confirm these experiences, writing in *Kommunist* in 1987:

> Socio-economic changes in districts inhabited by the small ethnic groups of the North are visibly reflected in the most important social indices: in the state of health of the people and in the demographic situation. They are signaling a great warning. The indigenous people are turning for medical help and are being hospitalised due to circulatory and oncological diseases. Illnesses of the ear, nose and throat are significantly more common among the northern ethnic people than among newcomers living in the same districts but under significantly better living conditions. The number of indigenous deaths from these illnesses are also higher. Infant mortality is high....The level of their social-psychological adaptation to the quickly changing conditions of life is decreasing. The growth of drunkenness and aggressiveness is an indicator of this process. From 1970-1980, one in two deaths among the indigenous population was caused by injuries in the home, accidents at work or murders and suicides

---

[48]With industrialization and the influx of non-Natives to the region, the availability of alcohol in stores, no matter how small the village, has led to alcohol abuse by Natives who may drink either in social situations or to escape the problems they face as indigenous peoples.

[49]Interview with elderly Mansi woman in Leiushi on the River Konda, August 1993.

(approximately 70-90 cases per 100,000 which is 3-4 times higher than the national average).[50]

A more recent report in *Izvestiia* quotes a Khatanga District (in the Taimyr Autonomous Region which borders the Iamalo-Nenetskii region to the east) police officer suggesting that it is social problems and alcohol that have led to crime in indigenous communities. "Things like the robbery or murder of fellow tribesmen never used to happen among the indigenous peoples. Now they are commonplace. Juvenile crime is growing especially fast. It's as if something is broken inside 13- and 14- year-old adolescents."[51]

Industrialization also brought about greater contact with non-Natives who generally treated Natives as subservient to themselves. The legacy of this may still be seen today as one particular elderly Mansi whom I interviewed in 1993 asked why I would not sit beside her. "It's probably because I am Native Mansi," she declared. As she spoke, it was evident that she felt self-conscious about being Mansi and certainly about being interviewed because she was Mansi.[52] The general helplessness felt by the inhabitants of the Konda River region rested solely on intense industrialization and the lack of the social infrastructure to support the population migration into the region.

Policy and economic planners attempted to address these concerns and in 1964 tried to establish social and entertainment facilities mainly for the migrant workers in the Tiumen' Oblast' region. A discussion of this decree clearly demarcates the planned buildings and services for the oil workers of the region. It also emphasizes mass cultural work not only for the oil and gas workers but

---

[50]A. Pika and B Prokhorov, "Bol'shie problemy malykh narodov [The big problems of small peoples]," *Kommunist* 16 (1987):16-83, translated in *IWGIA (International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs) Newsletter* 57 (1988):123-135. See also, Christopher M. Davis, "The former Soviet Union." *RFE-RL Research Report* 2, no. 40 (8 Oct. 1993): 35-43.

[51]Aleksei Tarasov, "Drunken Siberia," *Izvestia* 27 April 1995, 5, translated in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 47, no. 18 (1995): 17-18.

[52]Interview with elderly Mansi woman in Leiushi on the River Konda, 8 August 1993.

also for those who worked in the forestry industry. Yet, there was no mention of how the various clubs and cultural bases would benefit the indigenous peoples of the region.[53] While the policies of providing better social and medical services to the whole population were a continuation of Khrushchev's policies, it is evident that in the case of Tiumen' Oblast' in 1965, the major concern was providing the benefits and service to oil, gas and forestry workers that other workers in the rest of the country enjoyed. Moreover, it is striking that even when talking about the regions of Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskii National Okrugs, the Native inhabitants had little or no say in the process of industrializing and urbanizing the region. Also apparent is the attempt to justify such social and economic infrastructural developments noting how many people took advantage of a certain theater or concert or cultural club.[54] The document provides a chart of how many workers went to movies and to concerts in the previous year.[55]

The success of exploration and drilling for oil and gas led to new industrial and modern infrastructures such as high rise apartment buildings, cafeterias, movie theatres, and in some places elaborate opera and concert halls. Subsequently, pipelines were built to carry oil to Perm and Tiumen', and railways were constructed to accommodate the migration of new settlers as well as the passage of equipment for oil drilling and natural gas extraction.[56] Specifically in Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Okrug, the small villages of Samotlor and Surgut "became centres of intensive oil-drilling operations"[57] and

---

[53]A. E. Mikhailov, Predsedateliu Tiumenskogo oblispolkoma, "O khode vypolnenia Postanovlenia Soveta Ministrov RSFSR ot 16 Sentiabria 1964 goda No. 1168 'O merakh po okazaniiu pomoshchi v osvoenii neftianykh mestorozhgenii v Tiumenskoi oblasti'." Fond 814, Opis' 1, Delo 4241, list 20-29 (1965).

[54]Ibid.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, 12.

[57]Ibid., 390.

later in the late 1970s, Iamalo-Nenetskii Autonomous Okrug, Urengoy and Iamburg accommodated massive gas production. On territory that was once the migratory and grazing lands of reindeer and reindeer herding Khants and Iamalo-Nenets, huge urban cities were constructed and thrived on oil and gas development.

These industrialization policies were initiated by Khrushchev ostensibly to raise the country's standard of living, to sustain economic growth and to maintain Russia's superpower status. As industrialization intensified, energy consumption foreseeably rose. Energy requirements for the newly-industrializing Soviet Union exceeded the output of industrialization, meaning that there was a great deal of energy wasted with comparatively little to show for it. And not until the mid-1960s did the rate of energy consumption match the production output of the country.[58]

Concomitantly with rapid industrialization, the Soviet Union evolved from a mostly rural population to a mostly urban one with masses of people moving to urban cores to work in large factories and plants. Economic and industrial development encouraged the Natives of Siberia, whose territory became more and more urbanized and highly populated, to move to the cities and large towns.[59] Jobs, better housing conditions, better schools and opportunities were in the cities or large towns. As S.S. Savoskul contends, "[T]he largest population increase, including urban population, has taken place in north-west Siberia, that is, in the Khanty-Mansiyskii and Iamalo-Nentskiy [sic] okrugs."[60] The impact of the urbanization and the industrialization of the Northwest Siberian landscape was the continuing growth of large cities where small and medium-sized towns are quickly dying out because the population is lured to take jobs that support the massive urban infrastructure of cities such as

---

[58]Campbell, *The economics of Soviet oil and gas*, 3

[59]S.S. , "Urbanisation and the Minority Peoples of the Soviet North," in *The Development of Siberia: People and Resources*, 96-123

[60]Ibid., 110. Italics in original.

Surgut, Nizhnevartovsk or Urengoi. The consolidation of villages and towns in Northwest Siberia was acute as "one-third of those under 500 persons disappeared during the 1970s."[61]

Construction of new cities and new buildings scarred the fragile tundra and the taiga. For example, the city of Neftyugansk in 1970 had a population of 20,000, and in 1974 of 28,000; in 1997, however, it had a population of almost 50,000. Population increases for the city of Nizhnevartovsk, near Samotlor, were even more dramatic with the population rising from a few thousand in 1959 to 60-70,000 by the beginning of the 1970s to 250,666 in 1991, of whom 128,599 were men and 122,067 were women.[62] The government built towns and cities and their attendant infrastructures to support resource and industrial development, and to attract workers and provide for those who worked and lived in these remote regions of Siberia. Housing, entertainment facilities, medical facilities, schools and stores would be necessary to support the massive influx of oil and gas workers. The regime built cement cities of high and low rises in the middle of the tundra on permafrost in what we know today as Surgut, Nizhnevartovsk, Urengoi and Novoye Urengoi. Buildings were erected on stilts because of the instability of the permafrost on which they are built, with gas, sewer and water services also constructed above ground for the same reasons. These new cities have permanently damaged the environmental balance in the regions in which they have been built and service roads and railways have marred an even greater surface area surrounding the cities proper.

This does not take into account the pipelines that have been built also in the path of migratory patterns of reindeer and wild game and often spilling thousands of litres of oil, indisputably disturbing the ability of Natives in Northwest Siberia to pursue traditional economies without modern obstacles.

---

[61]Dienes, *Soviet Asia: Economic Development and National Policy Choices*, 13-15.

[62]Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, 390; Leslie Dienes and Theodore Shabad, *The Soviet Energy System*, 58; Goskomstat Rossiiskoi Federatsii Tiumenskoe Oblastnoe Upravlenie Statistiki, *Raspredelenie naseleniia Tiumenskoi Oblasti po polu i vozrastu, 1988-1992* (Tiumen', 1992), 30, 34, 38.

For example, in the first four months of 1991, there were 900 mishaps involving oil pipelines in Northwest Siberia alone.[63] The situation was made worse by the inability and lack of expertise in the former Soviet Union on how to clean up the oil spills that occur. In the marshland and the permafrost of the northern taiga and tundra, burning off of spilled oil from the ground is the preferred method of clean-up.[64] This causes both ground and air pollution. As a newspaper article reported in 1990 regarding Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskii Autonomous Okrugs, "Industrial intrusion on the taiga and tundra has severely exacerbated the ecological situation. Seven million hectares of hunting ground alone have been taken out of use, and the local residents forced to move to the outermost limits of the okrugs."[65] More recently, another environmental disaster was reported in September 1997 with more than "700 metric tons of crude oil spilled" into two rivers and 11 acres of ground northwest of Surgut.[66] While the report itself was brief, it was clear that the cause was leakage due to poor pipeline equipment and maintenance, and the extent of the spill was the result of the inability to "detect the problem promptly"[67] probably because of the lack of sophisticated computerized detection techniques already commonplace in the West.

---

[63]In a news report in *Pravda* on 31 May 1991, the British ITN was quoted reporting that an "enormous region of Siberia, equal in area to Western Europe, is gradually being destroyed as a result of oil leaks from petroleum pipelines that have fallen into disrepair." "Resonance: An Environmental Disaster?" *Pravda* 31 May 1991, 4, translated in *The Current Digest of Soviet Press*, XLIII (no. 22, 1991), 26.

[64]Ibid.

[65]*Izvestia* 4 March 1990, 1.

[66]Jennifer DeLay, "Leaking Pipeline Spills Crude oil into Siberian Rivers," *Pipeline News* no. 74 (30 August- 26 September 1997).

[67]Ibid.

The Economy under Leonid Brezhnev

Brezhnev's Economic Policies: uncertainty amid plenty

The Oil Industry

Compared to the flourish and bravado demonstrated by Khrushchev in the previous decade, Brezhnev's policies were seemingly conservative and inconsequential. Indeed, the leader's character shaped how the country, especially the economy, was run. Recent assessments of Brezhnev's leadership do not paint a favourable picture, emphasizing his dull and boring disposition, as illustrated starkly by his diaries that were published in 1994. Entries were remarkable for their unremarkableness.[68]

Revisionist considerations of Brezhnev's rule, however, place him in a more generous light. S. Frederick Starr, for example, compares Brezhnev to Nicholas I who was conservative and vapid on the surface, but underneath promoted liberal views and policies that paved the way for the emancipation of the serfs after his death. Starr argues that Brezhnev's rule readied the path for the reforms that Mikhail Gorbachev launched.[69] This explains, according to Starr, the discord between the seemingly stagnant polity and economy, and the somewhat vibrant culture and society that was emerging in the late 1970s and certainly in the 1980s.[70] Thane Gustafson goes further, arguing that the Brezhnev regime ushered in a "more open and detailed discussion of a broad

---

[68]One such entry reads, "Was home at the dacha. Had lunch--borscht with fresh cabbage. Rested in the yard, finished reading material. Watched hockey game...evening news. Had dinner, went to bed." Quoted in John M. Thompson, *A Vision Unfulfilled* (Lexington, MA; Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996), 422.

[69]S. Frederick Starr, "The Road to Reform," in *Chronicle of a Revolution*, Abraham Brumberg, ed. (1990), 20.

[70]See Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenona: historical interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) and Richard Stites *Soviet Popular Culture entertainment and society since 1900* (Cambridge [England] ; New York, NY, USA : Cambridge University Press, 1992).

range of policy issues...than under Khrushchev." And moreover, "[T]he explosion of new thinking under Gorbachev cannot be understood except as the result of a long evolution under Brezhnev."[71]

The prevailing views on Brezhnev's rule are incongruous and contradictory, with the development of oil and gas during the Brezhnev years an example of the dissonance and lack of a firm direction in the regime. While many of Brezhnev's policies may be assessed as studies in fine compromise and rapprochement in order to keep the status quo, it is clear that when it came to energy policies, especially oil and gas development, the regime devoted a great deal of money and effort to raise annual output. Shock measures were implemented when failure to meet five-year plans seemed imminent, and massive investments of resources (money and manpower) were the rule. When it came to the oil and gas industry, Brezhnev was neither apathetic nor complacent, but this attitude did not mean that Brezhnev had a solution to the economic and energy crisis facing the Soviet Union in the late 1970s.

The Brezhnev administration followed Khrushchev's *sovnarkhoz* reforms in 1965 with an attempt to find a middle ground in economic policy-making. The decentralization of decision-making powers to the ministries and the industries proved too much for the conservative stalwarts in the Communist Party. The administration of the economy and enterprises were regrouped under Gosplan. At the same time, Brezhnev allowed the factory to make some decisions. "The ideal of local self-government thus came to the fore as an alternative both to centralized ministerial rule and to bureaucratic decentralization."[72] Local self-government in Brezhnev's sense was accepted to make the enterprises more efficient, not to give local interests more power. Indigenous communities, for example, were not given self-government over their territories or their traditional economies.

---

[71] Thane Gustafson, *Crisis Amid Plenty: the politics of Soviet Energy under Brezhnev and Gorbachev* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 17.

[72] Starr, 20.

Arguably, the Soviets realized that oil meant economic power and hence it became central to the maintenance of the Soviet Union as a superpower[73] and, today, the development of the Russian Federation as a viable and strong democratic nation-state. Revenues from oil and gas are at the basis of making this a possibility. As Robert E. Ebel avers,

> Oil is a high-profile commodity, fueling much more than automobiles and airplanes. Oil fuels military power, national treasuries, and international politics. Because of this it is no longer a commodity to be bought and sold within the confines of traditional supply and demand balances. Rather, it has been transformed into a determinant of well-being, of national security and international power for those who possess it and the converse for those who do not.[74]

For the Soviet regime under Brezhnev and now for the Russian government, the major source of oil and gas is in Tiumen' Oblast', Northwest Siberia. Both the leaderships of Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin operated and operate within the framework outlined above by Ebel. Such attitudes signified for the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets of Northwest Siberia that the specter of great-power politics would intractably change their lives.

Oil provides both a relatively cheap and easily extractable source of energy for industrial and private use. It was in high demand in Western Europe and other countries and, therefore, could be sold for the hard currency that the Gorbachev and Yeltsin regimes needed to bring stability and prosperity to the

---

[73]Witness the certain panic that the Brezhnev leadership exhibited when informed in the mid-1970s that not only were energy sources declining in European Russia, but new possible sources of oil in Tiumen' Oblast' had not reached projected estimates. Moreover, there were reports from geologists that oil sources would decline rapidly and steadily by the next decade. Brezhnev's concern was not only to keep industrial ouput, especially oil production in line with the Tenth Five-Year Plan, but also with hard currency revenues brought in by selling oil to Western Europe. The investment and policy change in favour of developing the oil and gas industry in Tiumen' Oblast' was immediate. See Gustafson, *Crisis Amid Plenty*.

[74]Ebel, *Energy Choices in Russia*, 14.

Soviet and Russian economies. But as foreshadowed by the last years of the Brezhnev regime, oil and gas, while still the major hard currency earners for Russia, are in steady decline. Leslie Dienes asserts that the inordinately rapid development of major oil fields and the extraction of oil in Northwest Siberia such as Samotlor has rendered many of the fields in the region well past their prime.[75]

The drive to discover more sources of oil and gas in Northwest Siberia was also an attempt to meet the Soviet population and industry's growing demand for energy. The regime's rhetoric was that it wanted to keep up with and improve the standard of living that it had promised the population. In the early 1960s, oil and gas, and especially coal reserves, were being depleted in European Russia, and by the early 1970s the demand for other sources of oil and gas lay heavily on Northwest Siberia so that by the early 1990s, this region was producing well over 60 percent of the oil and gas output of the Soviet Union.[76] In 1983, oil production in Northwest Siberia was 616 mn tons, and in 1985 it fell to 595.3 mn tons. By 1988, spurred on by *perestroika* and ever persistent calls for increased production, it rose to 624.3 mn, tons, but by the following year had decreased to 606.3 mn tons and in 1990 to 569.7 mn tons.[77] (See Table 4.1) While oil and gas production in Northwest Siberia has been fluctuating since the early 1980s, with production falling in the 1985, resurgent in 1988 and then falling again in 1989 and 1990, the impact of oil and gas exploration and extraction has meant a steady decline in the standard of living, health, and retention of language, culture and traditional economies of Native peoples.

---

[75]Leslie Dienes, "Prospects for Russian Oil in the 1990s: Reserves and Costs," *Post-Soviet Geography* 34 (no. 2, 1993): 81.

[76]Michael J. Bradshaw, "Siberia at a Time of Change: New Vistas for Western Investment," *The Economist Intelligence Unit* (Special Report No. 2171, March 1992), 13-15.

[77]Bradshaw, "Siberia at a Time of Change,", 16.

Map 4.1: Geographical Distribution of Northwest Siberian oil has been removed because of copyright restrictions. See Robert E. Ebel, *Energy Choices in Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994) for the original source of this map.

Table 4.1 Oil production in West Siberia, 1970-90 (mn tons)[78]

Region	*1970*	*USSR %*	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1989*	*1990*	*USSR %*
USSR	353	100	490.8	603.2	593.3	606.3	569.7	100
RSFSR Total	284.8	80.7	411.3	547.7	542	552.2	516.4	90.6
Siberia	33.9	9.6	150.2	315.2	370.7	408.5	376.4	66.1
West Siberia	31.4	8.9	148	312.7	368.1	406	373.9	65.7
Tiumen' Oblast'	28.5	8.1	143.2	307.9	360.1	395.9	364.9	64.1

Table 4.2 Oil production in West Siberia, 1991-1996 (mn tons)[79]

Region	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*Russia %*
Russian Federation	461.1	395.8	343.8	315.7	306.7	301.2	100
European Russia	74.1	66.4	57.2	51.7	53.4	54.4	18.1
Siberia	331.8	277.8	240	222.3	211.6	206.2	68.5
West Siberia	329.9	276	238.3	220.7	209.8	204.3	67.8

[78]Bradshaw, *Siberia at a Time of Change*, 15.

[79]Matthew J. Sagers, "Russian Crude Oil Production in 1996: Conditions and Prospects," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 37, no. 9 (1996): 523-587.

The Gorbachev Period: *more of the same?*

The economy inherited by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 was in a state of decline. Characterized by a heavy administrative dependence of the resource-rich periphery on the core (Moscow; European USSR) and the core's dependence on natural resources from Siberia and Northern Kazakhstan, "the fate of Siberia [was] inextricably linked to the country's European core."[80] Andrew Bond and Leslie Dienes further argue that the centre-periphery relationship between European Russia and Siberia was a "dead circle," with Dienes emphasizing that this relationship was "a massive investment sinkhole, sucking in resources sorely needed for structural transformation of the Soviet economy."[81] In addition, Gorbachev's mismanagement of the overall economy and his system of allocation worsened the situation to a point that recovery may be impossible.[82]

How did the Soviet economy get to this point? How could the stagnant economy under Brezhnev experience a marked decline? When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he implemented the now well-known policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost'*, or restructuring and openness. Alec Nove points out a third dimension to his policies: *uskoreniye* or accelerated growth.[83] The years that ushered in *perestroika* and *glasnost'* were heady and tumultuous with change. While it is now difficult to think of any of Gorbachev's economic policies positively,[84] from 1986-1988, they were considered by those inside and outside the USSR as revolutionary, especially when compared to the preceding leadership.

---

[80]Andrew Bond, et. al., "Panel on Siberia: Economic and Territorial Issues," *Soviet Geography* 32, no. 6 (June 1991): 363-432.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 379.

[84]See comments by Leslie Dienes in Andrew Bond, et. al., "Panel on Siberia."

Gorbachev announced his then radical policies and ideas at the 27th Party Congress on 25 February 1986 and outlined the changes necessary for the Soviet Union to recover from debilitating economic crisis. In reality, the reforms promulgated by Gorbachev were similar to the Brezhnev-Kosygin reforms promulgated twenty years earlier.

The core of Gorbachev's ambitious programme of reform included making the centralized economy more efficient by strengthening the role of the centre so that Party policies could be more effectively achieved. But this was to be done without the constant interference and micromanaging of the centre. Within this major reform initiative, Gorbachev proposed doing away with the materials allocation system, undertaking price reform, advancing *khozrashchet*, and promoting self-management at the enterprise level meaning that factories must earn profits by keeping customers satisfied. Without the allocation system, enterprises were forced to find their own customers, introducing competition into the Soviet economy. Gorbachev suggested that "[I]n the final analysis, everything we are doing to improve management and planning and readjust organizational structures is aimed at creating conditions for effective functioning of the basic link of the economic system: the association or enterprise."[85] Because enterprises were to be self-managed, quotas and output targets would no longer come from a central decision-making organization, but rather depended on demand. This was to be tempered in the first few years when priorities were established by the state.[86] Gorbachev, like Brezhnev before him, was not ignorant of, or callous toward the importance of the oil and gas sector revenues for the Soviet state, and thus made the oil and gas industries a central priority.

Coinciding with Gorbachev's economic reform policies was "democratization". He introduced "new thinking" into his government and the Communist Party, with mixed success, receiving a great deal of opposition from

---

[85]Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress* (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1986), 43.

[86]Nove, (1989), 380.

conservatives in the Party and government. Eventually, however, election at the enterprise level, then the local soviets was accepted along with a measured freedom of expression[87] that would eventually pave the way for the frank discussion of a broad range of issues including poverty, environmental degradation and inter-ethnic tensions. Gorbachev also attempted to introduce legal reforms in a society with no culture of legality.[88] Inter-ethnic tensions eventually led to the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, despite Soviet equalization policies and the assumption of *sliianie* or convergence and fusion of nationalities and nations.

It was clear in the early 1980s that, like the Soviet economy, the oil industry was in trouble. In the last years of Brezhnev's reign, the emphasis was on extracting as much as possible out of already developed fields, rather than exploring for new sources of oil[89] or conservation. While it was known by both Soviet and Americans that the Soviet and American oil industries would soon produce less and less, for the Americans under the Carter administration, the reaction was conservation, but for the Soviets, the strategy was to expand the efforts to extract as much oil out of already producing fields. Therefore, as Ebel argues, there was no collapse of the oil industry in 1978 or even the beginning of the 1980s.[90] The Brezhnev government's strategy was to invest as many resources as possible into increasing production, and Gorbachev continued to practice this same policy throughout his leadership.

Gustafson argues that, on the whole, much like Brezhnev, Gorbachev was risk-averse when it came to the oil and gas industry because it was the chief source of energy and hard currency for the state. For the regime, oil was too

---

[87]Ibid.

[88]See Tim McDaniel, *The Agony of the Russian idea* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press), 1996.

[89]Ebel, 11.

[90]Ibid.

important a source of revenue with which to experiment.[91] The major difference between the leadership of Brezhnev and Gorbachev, largely owing to *glasnost'*, was that there was far more public debate and discussion about conservation, and the need for oil industry to restructure so that it would still be a viable source of energy in the twenty-first century. While more experts' sentiments regarding conservation, long-term planning and responsible management of energy, especially oil, was incorporated into the policies advanced by Gorbachev, traditional views prevailed. Thus, oil and gas exploration and exploitation continued as before, extracting as much as possible out of existing wells and searching intensively for new sources.[92]

As a result, by 1990, except for a resurgence in 1989, both oil and gas production were in decline in all of the Soviet Union, and notably in Northwest Siberia. The decrease in production in Northwest Siberia was particularly significant because it affected the entire country's revenue base. It was clear that Gorbachev had to do something in order to regain and maintain the fiscal viability of the country. As Brezhnev did before him, Gorbachev chose to invest more money into the ailing oil and gas industries. One of the major solutions to the decrease in oil extraction from all regions of Northwest Siberia was to restore idle or inoperative but potentially productive oil wells.[93] In areas such as Varyegan, administered by Varyeganeftigaz (Varyegan oil and gas), and located in territory inhabited by Khanty, investment in the restoration of idle or low functioning wells would earn 600 percent return on each dollar invested. These were compelling reasons, not just for the Soviets looking for foreign aid to undertake these well renovations, but also for the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).[94] What was certain to happen was that with the declining oil output and declining revenue, the

---

[91] Ibid.

[92] Gustafson, 316-317.

[93] Ebel, 26-30.

[94] Ibid., 29.

development and extraction of the oil and gas industry in Northwest Siberia would greatly intensify either through renovations in oil and gas wells and pipeline, or from the exploitation of newly-found gas reserves on the Iamal peninsula.

Oil and Gas Development in the 1990s

By the time Yeltsin came to power and the Union broke up in 1991, oil was in decline and gas was more and more relied upon as the chief energy source. Reform and the financial success of this sector of the economy was and is intertwined with Russia's recovery from economic decline.[95] The collapse of the Soviet Union changed the face of the oil and gas industry in Russia, although the gas industry is still under Gazprom, the government ministry overseeing gas development, pipeline construction, extraction, and sale. Furthermore, the Russian government has made it quite clear that it intends to play a very active role in the energy sector of industry for years to come.[96] The demise of communism opened the door to commerce and a free enterprise economy that invited oil and gas companies from around the globe to develop and invest in these industries. V.A. Nesterov, working for the Ministry of Fuel and Energy of the Russian Federation in 1995, suggested "[I]n short, Russia is without any doubt a country of very promising opportunities for potential investors."[97] Moreover, Nesterov argued forthrightly that, while the petroleum industry

---

[95]Sagers, "Russian Crude Oil Production," 523.

[96]Matthew Sagers and Valeriy Kriukov, "The Hydrocarbon Processing in West Siberia," *Post-Soviet Geography* 34, no. 2 (1993): 127-152.

[97]V.A. Nesterov, "The Petroleum Industry and the Future of Russia," *The Newsletter of the Canadian Institute of Resources Law* no. 51 (Summer 1995): 1-6. There have been attempts to entice foreign oil and gas companies to invest in the Northwest Siberian petroleum industry. See for example, "Khanty-Mansiisk fields, blocks up for licensing. (oil fields in Western Siberia)" *The Oil and Gas Journal* 92, no. 45 (Nov 7 1994): 96; and "Khanty-Mansiysk National Area. (offers exploration and development rights in Ob River oil and gas fields)" *The Oil and Gas Journal* 90, no. 48 (Nov 30 1992):37.

experienced setbacks because of economic reform and transition to a market-based economy, "we [Russia] remain the major energy producing state, providing for a substantial part of the world energy market supply."[98] One of the major aims of the petroleum industry was and still is to become fully integrated into the world energy economy.[99]

One of the first executive decisions made by Russia's Deputy Minister in charge of the energy sector, Viktor Chernomyrdin, before he became Prime Minister in 1992 was a stabilization programme for the oil industry,[100] which involved a substantial increase in investment. Echoing the crash programmes promulgated by Brezhnev and Gorbachev of pouring massive resources into the ailing oil industry, Chernomyrdin aimed to restore output levels to 350 million tons by the year 2000. He proposed to do this by increasing drilling operations to 25 million metres in 1992, up 10 million metres from previous years, and increasing overall depths drilled to 35 million metres by 1995. He also proposed opening new fields, increasing exploration drilling, reducing by 2000 each year the 25-30,000 idle wells scattered across Russia until a norm of 13,000 idle wells was reached. The government slated 40 billion rubles in interest-free loans for the industry, and in addition, government guarantees totaling 700 million dollars were granted for oil companies to purchase foreign equipment.[101]

Despite opportunities to reform the petroleum industry in Russia, and thus the opportunities to bring Russia out of its economic depression, the recovery of the oil industry has been painfully slow. Sagers points to several factors: decrease in oil extracted and new exploration drilling, an increase in the number of idle wells, and a great decline in the number of new fields being

---

[98]Nesterov., 1.

[99]Ibid.

[100]Matthew J. Sagers, "The Energy Industries of the Former USSR: A Mid-Year Survey," *Post-Soviet Geography* 34, no. 6(1993): 341-418.

[101]Ibid., 347.

exploited. More importantly, and coinciding with these geological problems are larger issues rooted in the political, economic and organizational structure: "lack of financing and effective production incentives, conflicting and inconsistent policies."[102] While Russia has taken pains to pursue foreign investors, this has had very limited success, with Texas-based Amoco most successful in Northwest Siberia.[103] Foreign companies have had great difficulties operating in Russia due to the lack of coordination between ministries and levels of government, and the lack of laws governing export and taxation "many of which are rooted in the legacy of the former centralized planned economic system."[104] These problems have marked the Yeltsin regime's management of the petroleum industry since 1992, even with the appointment of the dynamic young liberal Boris Nemtsov to head the Ministry of Fuel and Energy in 1997.[105] The apparent rationale for appointing Nemtsov to this post was to revitalize an industry that was "starved of investment and bogged down in bureaucracy."[106] Western investors were not very optimistic about Nemtsov changing the energy industry to a significant

---

[102]Sagers, "Russian Crude Oil Production," 525. Heavy reliance on large oil fields in Northwest Siberia as well as the shutdown of as many as 31% of Russia's oil wells because of lack of profits or because of breakdown have also led to decline. "Russian oil outlook grows gloomier," *Oil and Gas Journal* 90, no. 49 (7 December 1992):33-34.

[103]"Amoco and Nadymgazprom have presented in Salekhard the development feasibility study covering three fields on Iamal Peninsula," *The Oil and Gas Journal* 91, no. 45, (8 November 1993): 2; "Amoco is among winners of rights to develop reserves in the Khanty-Mansiisk area of western Siberia," *The Oil and Gas Journal* 91, no. 39 (27 September 1993): 4; "U.S. Export-Import Bank approved an $82 million loan to finance the sale of Caterpillar pipeline construction machinery for use on a Gazprom line from the Iamal Peninsula." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 91, no. 15 (April 12 1993): 2; "Amoco has signed an agreement with Russia's Gazprom to conduct a feasibility study of potential reserves on the Iamal Peninsula," *The Oil and Gas Journal* 90, no. 35 (31 August 1992): 4.

[104]Ibid.

[105]Boris Nemtsov, called by the Russia press the President's "golden boy", was appointed by Yeltsin to head the Ministry in April of 1997, while at the same time holding the portfolio of First Deputy Minister. Jennifer DeLay, "Nemtsov Faces Huge Task as New Russian Energy Head," *Pipeline News* no. 56 (20-26 April 1997).

[106]Ibid.

degree, at least in the short run, especially considering his lack of experience in this sector of the economy, nevertheless, some investors pointed out that he brought a fresh outlook to the Ministry.

Like Brezhnev and Gorbachev before him, Yeltsin has concentrated on gas development to make up for the shortfall in oil production. Gas development is relatively new, especially in Northwest Siberia where it only received development priority around 1980. Oil development has generally been favoured because it is more easily extracted and processed than is gas. Until recently, gas from oil sites has been flared and wastefully burned because there were no pipelines and no processing facilities nearby. With the steady and certain decline of the oil reserves and the inability of the Soviets to manage the oil industry, Brezhnev, by 1980, relied on natural gas from Northwest Siberia to bolster the economy. Gas "seemed like a godsend, and Brezhnev reached for it enthusiastically; but he had no solutions to the underlying problem, which was not that of finding new supplies but of containing costs."[107] Gustafson avers that gas, for the Brezhnev and the Gorbachev regimes, was the "bridging fuel" from "the era of oil toward the coal-and-nuclear future of the next century." He also argued in 1989 that "[I]f it were not for natural gas, the Soviet economy would now be in serious trouble indeed."[108]

Natural gas reserves in the Soviet Union in 1976 were enormous and seemingly limitless, and it was the only energy industry to meet its planned target for the 1976-80 period.[109] By 1981, the target for natural gas extraction was increased by 50 percent, along with six transcontinental pipelines of 20,000 kilometres that would stretch across the continent to be finished within one five-year plan period. This target was met without much problem, but at a high cost that Russia is still paying for today in the form of shoddy construction of pipelines and poor materials used, resulting in leakage and waste of natural

---

[107]Gustafson, 332.

[108]Ibid., 137.

[109]ibid, 139.

gas,[110] not to mention the environmental damage done to the fragile terrain. Shortsightedly, and perhaps, desperately, the Brezhnev and Gorbachev regimes developed the gas industry very much like the oil industry, by extracting as much as possible for both domestic and foreign consumption in the bid to bolster state revenues and to keep the industrial complexes operational. Yeltsin may also be making the same mistakes as natural gas becomes more and more valuable for the state to extricate itself from its economic slump.[111]

The most prominent active gas fields in the 1980s and today are Urengoy and Iamburg fields, both in the Iamalo-Nenetskii Autonomous Region. Urengoy was opened in 1978 and by 1988 had reached its peak output of 300 billion cubic meters (bcm). It only produced 242.9 bcm in 1995 but still contributed 40 percent to Russia's total gas output. Iamburg field opened in 1986 and reached a maximum output of 179.3 bcm in 1994, but decreased to 177.8 bcm in 1995. Because of the poor management and rather reckless extraction of gas from these large fields and many other smaller fields in Northwest Siberia, decreasing output is once again a worry for the energy sector of the Russian economy.

As a result, the Russian government, like Gorbachev's regime in 1988-89, is looking northwards to the Iamal peninsula to offset the decreasing output of these giant gas fields and the rapidly declining oil industry. The bulk of the gas reserves in Northwest Siberia lies underneath the Iamal peninsula, the traditional reindeer herding grounds of the Iamalo-Nenets. Attempts to develop this part of Northwest Siberia have been thwarted not so much by environmental concerns or lobbying by the Natives for their interests, but because of the expense that would be accrued in doing so.[112] The peninsula itself lies on

---

[110]Ibid.

[111]"Russia pins energy hopes on western Siberia gas," *Oil and Gas Journal* 90, no. 36 (7 September 1992): 17-20.

[112]Toni Mack, "The Last Frontier," *Forbes* 149, no. 10 (11 May 1992): 54-55. See Piers Vitebsky, "Gas, environmentalism and native anxieties in the Soviet Arctic: the case of Iamal peninsula," *Polar Record* 26 (1990):19-26.

continuous permafrost and requires sensitive extraction techniques that have not yet been perfected in Russia. Moreover, the construction of pipelines and railways requires special engineering technology, again because of permafrost, as well as the bogs and swamps prevalent on the Iamal peninsula.[113] Major investment is needed for this to happen and the Russian government is looking to Western partners to fill this need. Russia receiving loans and expertise from the World Bank and other lending agencies, accentuated "national energy needs rather than revitalization of sustainable local economies" and "projects that aim to transfer advanced technology and improved techniques to exploit oil and gas more efficiently."[114] WINGAS GmbH, a joint venture between Germany's Wintershall AG (65 % ownership) of Kassel, Germany, and OAO Gazprom (35 % ownership), the Russian gas company is currently constructing a pipeline that will extend 4000 kilometers between the German interior and the Iamal Peninsula. The completion date, depending on weather conditions, is October 1999.[115] German banks have given the initial US $2.5 billion line of credit to develop the pipeline which will run through Belarus. Already, Rem Viakhirev, head of Gazprom, has proposed the construction of another pipeline to feed into Western Europe.[116]

The Russian government has given very short shrift to the social and environmental concerns of the indigenous peoples in the northern Tiumen' Oblast' region as the geographical space they occupy continues to be mapped for further intensive oil and gas development, extraction and exploitation. Within

---

[113]B. Prokhorov, "Kak sberech' Iamal (How to Save Iamal)," *Znanie-Sila* 7 (1988): 1-8, translated in *IWGIA (International Working Group for International Affairs) Newsletter* 58 (1988): 113-28.

[114]Gail Osherenko, "Indigenous Political and Property Rights and Economic/Environmental Reform in Northwest Siberia," *Post-Soviet Geography* XXXVI, no. 4 (April 1995): 225-237.

[115]"WINGAS to start construction of the JAGAL pipeline" http://www.wingas.de/wingas/html/e/presse/aktuell/p99-01e.htm (2 February 1999).

[116]"Gazprom Head says Russian gas giant ready to oppose pressure," *Interfax* 18 April 1997, translated in *Pipeline News* no. 57, Part II (26 April-2 May 1997).

the policy-making of the Russian government, which is itself deeply involved in the promotion and advancement of the oil and gas industry, very little effective and practical consideration has been devoted to preserving the environment and the lifestyles of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets. What consideration is given to the cultural, social and territorial interests of the indigenous peoples in Siberia is incidental. Even seemingly progressive legislation in line with international laws and conventions is bankrupt. While Russian laws and legislation passed on 22 April 1992 on "Urgent measures to protect the lands inhabited and farmed by the Northern aboriginal peoples" follows International Labour Organization Convention 169 stating the rights of indigenous peoples over their traditional territories, "it contradicts existing legislation and, in particular, the Land Code of the Russian Federation."[117]

One hopeful sign arising even before the break-up of the Soviet Union was a demand by all levels of Siberian government for a devolution of power

---

[117]State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Committee on Nationalities, "Acts and Other Legislative Standards Relating to the Political and Socio-Economic Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Russia (19th-20th centuries): Self-Government, Land and Natural Resources," Report to the International Conference to Assist Russian Federal Programmes Supporting Aboriginal Peoples of the North (Moscow, 1995), 15.

Map 4.2: Geographical Distribution of Northwest Siberian gas has been removed because of copyright restrictions. See Robert E. Ebel, *Energy Choices in Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994) for the original source of this map.

Table 4.3: Gas production in the West Siberia, 1970-90 in bcm[118]

Region	*1970*	*USSR %*	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1989*	*1990*	*USSR %*
USSR	197.9	100	289.3	435.2	642.9	796	814.7	100
RSFSR	83.3	42.2	115.2	254	462	616	640.4	78.6
Siberia	10.5	5.3	39.7	162.2	382.6	542	570	69.9
West Siberia	9.5	4.8	38.2	160.2	380.6	539	567	69.6
Tiumen' Oblast'	9.3	4.7	35.7	156	374	533	562	69

Table 4.4: Gas production in West Siberia, 1991-95 in bcm[119]

Region	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*Russia %*
Russian Federation	642.9	640.4	617.6	606.8	595.4	100
European Russia	16.8	14.4	13.5	11.6	11.9	2
Siberia	582.4	584.3	566.6	560.6	550.8	92.5
West Siberia	574	576.1	563.4	557.4	547.6	92
Tiumen' Oblast'	573.7	575.8	556.6	549.7	540.5	90.1

[118]Ibid, 15.

[119]Matthew J. Sagers, "The Russian Natural Gas Industry in the Mid-1990s," *Post Soviet Geography* 36, no. 9 (1995): 521-564.

from the centre. Siberian leaders from Khabarovsk to Iakutsk to Khanty-Mansiisk formed an alliance and promulgated the Siberian Agreement and after the disintegration of the USSR, called for a "decolonization" of Siberia and for economic autonomy. The "Siberian Agreement" was formed on 3 October 1990 in the interest of advancing economic concerns of several Siberian regions. Siberian leaders' arguments centred around the falling living standards in Siberia despite the fact that they held the majority of resources in the country extracted and sold domestically and internationally.[120] Leaders of the Tiumen' region specifically were adamant that larger "umbrella government corporations" should not be allowed to dominate the resources in their region, especially since,

> It's a sad fact: Big oil has not made the people of Tiumen' rich. But it's even sadder that oil has not made the country rich, either. The situation in the oil fields is more and more alarming....There is no roar of airplane engines in half the airports--there's no fuel. More and more cities are plunged into darkness as evening approaches--the power is turned on only for a few hours. There are frozen lines waiting at the gas pumps.[121]

Natives and non-Natives alike also expressed these facts in the summers I spent in Tiumen' Oblast'. Questions, especially from those who were poorest, usually widowed Native women, abounded regarding why industrial development has not made life easier for them, and why their pensions remained so small. The situation was particularly acute because by 1993 and 1994, it many knew that a barrel of oil cost between 18 to 22 American dollars on the world market.

Despite the cohesion formed amongst Siberian leaders, the devolution of power from the centre, while providing some limited success to the local level

---

[120]Aleksei Tarasov, "Siberia Demands Decolonization," *Izvestia* 30 March 1992, 2, translated in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 44, no. 13 (1992): 9-10.

[121]Igor Ogniov, "Tiumen's Surprise for Russia," *Izvestia* 9 January 1992, 2, translated in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 44, no. 1 (1992): 25-26.

governments, has not filtered down to the indigenous communities. The situation reflects the lack of political authority of Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets. They have no popular support base since their proportion of the population in the oblast' is only between 1 to 4 percent. Moreover, the majority do not hold significant interest in the huge oil and gas corporations found on their territories, relying mostly on the conscience of oil and gas companies, and the government for any protective measures to be passed and implemented regarding the environment and their rights.

Whither the Natives? Social Problems

Oral accounts from Mansi in the Konda region, a Khant from the Surgut region and Iamalo-Nenets in Tibei Salei in the Tazovskii region suggest that many indeed believed in the propaganda of the Soviet regime regarding their evolution as a civilized people, into Soviet citizens. When speaking of the Soviet regime, there is a consensus among aboriginal elders that the Soviets brought them a better way of life by providing schools for children, medical care, a pension, and goods in the stores.[122] As one Mansi woman recalled, "Soviet power brought us electricity, television, and gas for motorcycles and snowmobiles."[123] And a Khant man who was orphaned as a boy strongly and confidently argues "Soviet power allowed me to educate myself, to go to technical school to make something of myself, so that today I work as the Native peoples representative at Surgutneftigaz (Surgut oil and gas company)."[124] Although the emphasis was on the fact that he was able to do it on his own

---

[122]Interviews conducted in the Konda region July and August of 1993, in the Tazovskii region in July and August of 1994, and in Prince George in May 1996.

[123]Interview with Mansi villager in Shugur, Konda region, August 1993.

[124]Interview with Petr Moldanov, a Khant from Surgut, in Prince George, B.C., May 1996.

without slipping into alcoholism[125] and poverty as many of his counterparts did, it was evident that it was the availability of Soviet education and a technical school in Surgut that gave him the opportunity to "make something" of himself. While these oral accounts must be carefully analyzed through the lens of the hardships that followed the collapse of the USSR, they are still valuable for the perceptions and the memories with which Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets identify. Indeed, these are memories that form their identities as indigenous peoples dealing with the realities of colonization and Sovietization, and in recent years, with reforms towards a capitalist economy.

The relationship between the Soviets and the Natives was complex and fraught with ambiguities and paradoxes. It is interesting to note, for example, that at times the efforts of the Soviet regime were somehow separated from the relationship that indigenous peoples have with European Slavs who immigrated in enormous numbers to Northwest Siberia, especially after World War II. The racism and prejudice experienced from Ukrainians, Russians, Belarussians, etc., (usually generically called "Russians" by most I interviewed) was palpable. One interviewee, a Mansi woman noted how much more she had because her husband is a Russian.[126] Prior to 1991, many Mansi who could pass for Russian declared Russian to be their ethnicity during censuses, noting that it was easier to live as a Russian than it was to live as a Mansi.[127] Nevertheless, these often unnamed and unspoken sentiments were sometimes divorced from the policies

---

[125]The problem of alcoholism among Natives in Siberia and the Russian North is a long standing one that began in the Imperial period and arguably worsened during the Soviet, industrial era. Alelsei Tarasov, reporting for *Izvestia* contends, "The fact that a number of indigenous peoples of the North are dying is not news. In the opinion of specialists from the Scientific Research Institute for Medical Problems of the North, which is located in Krasnoiarsk, the tragedy of the Northern peoples began largely with the coming of Russians and their "Trojan horse"-- "firewater," against which the indigenous Northerners' systems were not protected. Then came the infections. Tuberculosis and cancer are the scourge of the Northerners. But immoderate drunkenness is still the main cause of death among the numerically small peoples of the Far North. Their life expectancy is 18-20 years less than the Russian average." Tarasov, "Drunken Siberia," 5.

[126]Interview with Mansi woman, Listvenichnyi, August 1993.

[127]Interview with the head of the *Spassenie Iugri*, Listvenichnyi branch, August 1993.

that the Soviet regime implemented. When asked about boarding schools for their children, for example, many Natives replied that it was a very good policy because it educated the children allowing them to go on to technical schools or universities in St. Petersburg or Moscow. On the other hand, there was also sadness mixed with pride, especially among the older Natives I interviewed, that their children and many others now live in the cities because that is where the jobs are. Many noted that they seldom saw their children and grandchildren who lived in larger centres such as Tiumen', Surgut, or Khanty-Mansiisk and for the most part knew little if anything about the traditional Native way of life.

Indeed, because of the depopulation of the once traditionally Khanty, Mansi or Iamalo-Nenets villages, the elderly who once relied on extended family to live with, care for or share a household economy with are now left alone. Many elderly widowed women in particular find themselves living alone, having to perform everyday household duties such as fetching well water, chopping wood, gathering berries, grocery shopping, cooking, gardening, and snow clearing. One particularly sad case was that of a woman in the village of Leyushi who was homeless. In 1993, she was 89 years old and the village administration was allowing her to live in one of the rooms of the schoolhouse. It was evident upon meeting her that she could not take care of herself. She had only bread to eat and she had collected rainwater for her cooking needs which usually meant tea or just plain water. Her mobility was limited and yet there was no outhouse in sight of the school and no sink in the premises she occupied. Although it was summer when I met her, she complained of being cold, and indeed the room in which she lived was cold and dirty. Because of the tight financial situation in the village, there was only so much that could be done for her. The representative for *Spassenie Ugri*, the Khanty and Mansi association for cultural survival, was appealing to the association to help her. But what was most evident both from speaking with this elderly Mansi woman and the villagers attempting to help her was that they felt that it was squarely the responsibility of this woman's family to help and to care for her. The paradox and painful irony of this woman's story was that her daughter is a well-known and much-celebrated Mansi poet who

was held up as the remarkable example of Mansi achievement, as a symbol of Mansi ethnic, even "national" pride.[128] For the Mansi living in the Konda region this example underlines the breakdown in the kinship and family units that they traditionally held valuable, that the care for extended family members could no longer be an expected part of the Mansi lifestyle as more and more young people move to cities to work and live. While this is just one very extreme example, the individuals I interviewed over the age of 50 and whose children had left the village for city life, 36 out of the 41 interviewed, whether Khanty, Mansi or Iamalo-Nenets) stated or mentioned that they were alone or without many close family nearby because their children had left to work or go to school in the cities.[129]

Conclusion

As family units were breaking down because of industrialization and modernization, the social infrastructure intended to replace what kin and family provided for its members were not successful in providing for the needs of the indigenous peoples of the Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskii regions. Some of the latter have forthrightly suggested that the development of territories that they use for hunting, fishing and reindeer herding will lead to the death of their culture and traditions. Many reindeer-herding Khanty and Iamalo-Nenets, for example, see the increased production of oil and gas translating into the decimation of their reindeer herds. A repeated theme when interviewing Iamalo-Nenets in Tibei Salei was the loss of reindeer as a result of gas development. They pointed out the importance of reindeer in burial rituals and

---

[128]Interview with Mansi elder, Leiushi, August 1993.

[129]Interviews with various individuals in July and August 1993 and 1994 in the Kondinskoye and in the Tazovskii regions, respectively.

asserted that "without reindeer we cannot exist as indigenous peoples."[130] But will it be possible for such lifestyles to be maintained in the coming century?

Even with the declining oil and gas output in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Northwest Siberia remains the main source of fossil fuel energy in the Russian Republic. Indeed, fully one-third of all gas reserves in the former Soviet Union may be found beneath the Iamal peninsula, territory designated by reindeer-herding Khanty and Iamal-Nenets to be prime grazing land for their reindeer.[131] The indigenous minorities who regard major tracts of Northwest Siberia as their traditional territory on which they practice their traditional economies, have very limited options in a nation- and state-building Russia reliant on Northwest Siberia and the Iamal peninsula not only for its energy needs but also for its major sources of hard currency and trade commodities.[132]

---

[130]Moldanov asserted this very argument at The Second International Working Seminar on Problems of Northern Peoples, held at the University of Northern British Columbia, May 1996. Interview with Iamal-Nenets man in Tibei Salei, July 1994.

[131]Osherenko, 226.

[132]See Peter Nulty, "The Black Gold Rush in Russia," *Fortune* (15 June 1992): 126-130.

Chapter Five
National Imaginings and Inventions of Tradition: Ethnic Survival in Northwest Siberia

In a post-colonial, post-Soviet world, attempts by Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets Natives to define themselves as distinct ethnic communities with distinct cultures and political and economic organizations hinges on their survival amidst massive resource and industrial development over which they have very little say.

This chapter deals with the social impact that resource development and environmental degradation have had on the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets peoples of northwestern Siberia. I argue that the degradation of their territories because of industrial development, particularly oil and gas exploration and extraction, has led to the social and cultural degradation of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets peoples. Following this "siege" by government and big industries, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets are endeavoring to protect whatever unspoiled territory and culture they have left. Their struggle to protect their environment and survive as distinct ethnic groups has led to their politicization characterized by a rise in political and ethnic consciousness. The central focus of this chapter is to examine the manifestation of this politicization. This political and national consciousness is rooted in memory and imaginings of their past, in what historian Eric Hobsbawm calls "the invention of tradition."[1] According to Hobsbawm, there are three overlapping types of "invented traditions." There are:

> a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.[2]

---

[1]See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[2]Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in ibid., 9.

The Soviet regime promoted the cultural expressions of indigenous northern peoples' traditional societies through the *pokazukha*[3] or show. Ironically, Khanty, Mansi, and Iamalo-Nenets also appeal to tradition in order to voice their demands for political and economic self-government. Subsequently, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets have attempted to recapture, reinvent and remember their past to legitimate their land claims, their demands for self-government, and their survival as indigenous peoples with a rich and complex history.

As Mikhail Gorbachev attempted to continue his economic reforms of *perestroika*, his social reform rooted in *glasnost'* demanded the devolution of power from the centre. Indeed, these forces of democratization, as they came to be regarded, led the liberal reformers of the Soviet Union to curtail drastically the power of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The Party "renounced" its constitutionally guaranteed right to power and a month later, in March 1990, Gorbachev created a Presidential system in the USSR "transferring" political decision-making powers from the Party to the state. Gorbachev implemented these policies to maintain the democratization and economic restructuring of the country. He also experienced a great deal of pressure from liberals and conservatives alike. Gorbachev faced the dilemma of liberalizing the economy while attempting to maintain his loyalty to the ideology of communism. In the end, the demands of a decentralized economy took precedence, whereby the Party's power quickly eroded.[4] The decline in the Party's monopoly on power also opened the door to multi-party politics in the Soviet Union.

Two months later, Boris Yeltsin became the Chair of the Russian Supreme Soviet (de-facto the Russian President) on the platform of Russian independence from the Soviet Union and radical economic reform, meaning that Russian laws

---

[3]This term comes from the word *pokazat'* or to show, and is a slang term understood to mean a show in the order of a Potemkin village whereby the head of administrations, in this case, Native elites assisted by Amoco money show off their culture and traditions giving the impression that they have been preserved in "authentic" form.

[4]See Michael Urban with Vyacheslav Igrunov and Sergei Mitrokhin, *The Rebirth of Politics in Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Thomas F. Remington, *Politics in Russia* (New York: Longman, 1999); Joan DeBardeleben, *Soviet Politics in Transition* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1992); and Greg Poelzer, "Devolution, Constitutional Development and the Russian North," *Post-Soviet Geography* Vol. XXXVI, no. 4 (April 1995): 204-214.

and constitution would take precedence over the laws and constitution of the USSR. Gorbachev regarded Yeltsin's election to the Russian presidency with much worry, knowing that Yeltsin was unpredictable and that he would capitalize on growing ethnic alienation from the centre in the republics, suggesting that Russia was just as victimized and plundered by the Soviet regime as the other union republics. This idea did not originate with Yeltsin. Russian scholars and Russian nationalists argued this point vehemently, especially when Lithuania was steadfastly separating itself from the Union. Under his tenure and administration, Gorbachev adopted policies of *new thinking* , and as Gail Lapidus argues, postulated "a specifically *Russian* national consciousness within the Russian Republic itself, focused on the demands for a full range of Russian political, economic, and cultural institutions distinct from all-Union institutions."[5] Distancing himself from the Soviet regime, Yeltsin also called for a new union treaty among the republics.

Many within and without the Soviet Union regarded Yeltsin as a liberal democrat who advocated a decentralization of power to the regions, something that Gorbachev had encouraged just a year before he lost his power.[6] But after Gorbachev lost power, it was not only other Union republics that took the cue of self-government and sovereignty. In the spirit of *perestroika* and Yeltsin's apparent advocacy of decentralization and the development of a *Russian* national consciousness (as opposed to Soviet centralization policies), cities and regions within Russia itself asserted their own civic and regional concerns over control of their economies and resources. This phenomenon was and has been most notable in Siberia where regional leaders and elites have attempted to control their regions and territories in defiance of the central government.[7]

The interaction of state-building, nationalism and economic development is uppermost in the political agenda of the Yeltsin regime. For Russia, because of

---

[5]Gail Lapidus, "The Impact of Perestroika on the National Question," in *From Union to Commonwealth: Nationalism and Separatism in the Soviet Republics*, Gail Lapidus and Victor Zaslavsky with Philip Goldman, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 61. Italics in original.

[6]Philip Goldman, Gail Lapidus and Victor Zaslavsky, "Introduction: Soviet Federalism- its origins, evolution and demise," *From Union to Commonwealth*, 12.

[7]See Hughes, "Regionalism in Russia."

the inefficiency and outdated technologies used in the manufacturing industry that produced virtually unmarketable goods, economic development meant an intensification on the extraction and development of natural resources, most of which lay in the Siberian heartland. The advancement of Russian national and economic interests, then, was at the expense of native interests and concerns. For the most part, in the Russian agenda of economic development and state building, with the goal of becoming an integral part of the capitalist world economy, there is no place for aboriginal interests or aboriginal rights. And yet, it is within this transitional phase between communism and capitalism that indigenous elites are attempting to voice their concerns regarding their survival as peoples, as communities with serious and legitimate political, economic and social concerns.

Problems of Social and Cultural Degradation

To the detriment of the indigenous people of Northwest Siberia, the development of oil and gas reserves on their traditional hunting, fishing and reindeer-herding territory transformed and re-identified it as empty space to be populated and developed, as a place to build massive cement cities and to drill hundreds of thousands of possible oil and gas sites, and as a major source of hard-currency revenue. Soviet indoctrination and the policies of internationalism transformed the Khanty, Mansi, Iamalo-Nenets and other Siberian Natives into the industrialized Homo Sovieticus,[8] with Native elites attempting to restore, reinvent and imagine their indigenous identity. As the Mansi writer Iuvan Shestalov forcefully asserts

> Civilisation...What is that? Who is indeed civilised? And who is the genuine savage and barbarian? Questions. Questions. Barbarian attitude towards nature, the nature of Man, customs, traditions, non-written laws of human civilisation. Revolution. Revolutionary

[8]There is a brief discussion of what Soviet industrialization was meant to do in Jeremy Tasch, "Institutional Morass and the Challenge of Development: Post-Soviet Observations in Fuel and Environmental Management," unpublished paper presented at the 1996 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Charlotte, North Carolina, 9-13 April 1996.

> renovation. The breaking of the old, outworn. Construction of a new society, of a new man. Slogans. Slogans. Slogans....[9]

While a certain degree of syncretism[10] is evident, strikingly, most of the indigenous Natives in Northwest Siberia, especially the Mansi and Khanty, live as Russians do, and are immersed in the Russian language and the Soviet culture in which they grew up, were educated and live.[11]

Major industrial development led to a significant increase of the non-indigenous population in the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Okrug from 98,000 in 1959 to over 500,000 in 1979, and to 998, 600 by 1989.[12] By contrast the Khanty and Mansi population increased only by 12 percent to 28,497 in the same period. In 1959, the Khanty-Mansiisk region was 17 percent Khanty and Mansi, by 1979 their share of the population in their own region fell to less than 4 percent.[13] Today the estimated proportion of the Khanty and Mansi population on their own traditional lands is one percent.[14] In the Iamalo-Nenetskii Autonomous Okrug, indigenous peoples make up 6 percent of the population. Indeed, the rate of urbanization, the proliferation of large cities on the Northwest Siberian tundra and taiga has overwhelmed the Native population.

---

[9]Iuvan Shestalov, "Khanty. Mansi. Kto my?" *Sterkh: etnos, religia, kul''tura*, no. 1 (1993): 4-5.

[10]See Marjorie Balzer, "Rituals of Ethnic Identity: Markers of Siberian Khanty Ethnicity, Status and Belief," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 83 (1981): 850-67.

[11]See the excellent study on the Nivkh of Sakhalin in Bruce Grant, *The Soviet House of Culture: A Century of Perestroikas*. Grant expertly outlines the search for a new identity and a new reality by the Nivkh on Sakhalin as they grapple with the collapse of the infrastructure provided by the Soviet Union.

[12]Gosudarstvennyi Komitet SSSR po Statistike, *Natsional'nyi Sostav Naselenia SSSR po Dannym Vsesoyuznoi Perepisi Naselenia 1989*, (Moscow, 1991), 46-48.

[13]Forsyth, 391.

[14]Henning Bauer, Andreas Kappeler, Brigitte Roth, (HRSG.), *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991);"Native Northern People Eye their Rights, " *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 42, no. 29 (1990): 20-21.

Table 5.1: Population of Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets in Tiumen' Oblast', 1926-1989.[15]

	1926	*1959*	*1970*	*1979*	*1989*
Total for Region			1,055,000	1,160,000	1,321,000
Khanty	17,334	19,410	19,491	18,762	20,371
Mansi	6,095	6,449	7,025	6,727	7,268
Nenets	16,217*	23007*	18,769	19,008	22,619

*Denotes that this is the combined figures for Nenets in all of the RSFSR.

In the period between 1979 and 1989, Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskii Autonomous Okrugs had the highest increase in population growth in all of the Soviet Union, as a result of both natural population increase and migration.[16] Vladimir Sangi, the first President of the Association of the Small Peoples of the North, stated in somewhat romantic tones,

> The other civilization burst into this fragile civilization with all its energy and, like a tank, rumbled over the body of the northern culture that was incomprehensible and alien to it. And as long as we keep going on about how many schools and hospitals have been built in the North during the past 70 years, which peoples have become literate, how many people have become doctors, teachers, writers, etc., without taking into

[15]Goskomstat RSFSR *Tiumenskoe Oblastnoe Upravlenie Statistiki, Sostav Naselenia Narodov Severa po Itogam Vsesoiuznoi Perepisi Naselenie 1989* (Tiumen', 1989), 3-4; *Etnicheskoe Razvitie Narodnostei Severa v Sovetskii period* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1987), 67, 101; Bradshaw, Siberia at a time of Change, 34.

[16]Michael Bradshaw, *Siberia at a Time of Change: New Vistas for Western Investment*, Special Report No. 2171 (London: The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1992), 35.

> account what has actually happened to entire peoples, we won't find a way out of our historical impasse.[17]

Evident in Sangi's statement is the urgency of the situation for aboriginal peoples in Siberia, the need to save or recapture lost languages, cultures and traditions of the Native peoples of Siberia, including the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets.

Newcomers who came to Northwest Siberia, it appeared, were there for "fast money" eager to exploit the land and its resources. Their main focus was to earn money[18] and, therefore, had very little concern for the natural environment that was Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets territory. Migration into Northwest Siberia by Europeans led to typical problems of a highly transient population hoping to make the highest wage possible.[19] Moreover, speaking of Siberia as a whole

> An additional factor contributing to labor movements within the region are boom and bust economic cycles, to which Siberia is vulnerable because of the unidimensional, raw material orientation of its economy. Mineral deposits and timber stands are exploited and abandoned as production shifts to new locations.[20]

Native elites and elders argue that while some Natives hold non-traditional occupations in the fields of medicine, education and in more recent years, politics, for many the Soviet lifestyle was antithetical to their social and economic organization. While the European population came to the Tiumen' Oblast' in the tens of thousands, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets left the growing urban cores of the region. Echoes of this phenomenon date back to the

---

[17]Quoted in "Native Northern Peoples Eye Their Rights," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 42, no 29 (1990): 20-21.

[18]T.I. Zaslavskaia, V.A. Kalmyk and L.A. Khakhulina, "Social Development of Siberia: Problems and Possible Solutions," in *The Development of Siberia People and Resources*, Alan Wood and R.A. French, eds. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 183.

[19]Andrew R. Bond, et. al., "Panel on Siberia: Economic and Territorial Issues" *Soviet Geography*, vol. XXXII, no. 6 (June 1991): 363-432.

[20]Ibid., 365.

beginning of Russian colonization of Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets lands. In the seventeenth century, in an attempt to preserve their traditional way of life and customs, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets migrated away from centres of Russian industry and trade, continuing and maintaining their life of hunting, fishing and reindeer-herding. Many continue to migrate from the urban industrial centres that accommodate the oil and gas industry in the Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskiy Autonomous Regions. The freedom to migrate from the urban cores becomes more difficult as the infrastructures of oil and gas as well as of cities render this choice less and less viable. Based on the 1989 census, the level of urban populations for Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenets is 90.9 percent and 77.9 percent respectively.[21] The Russian overall average is 73.6%,[22] while the Tiumen' Oblast' overall average is 72.8%.[23] Among the northern indigenous populations, 11.1% of Khanty lived in urban centres in 1979 and 16.8% in 1989; 24.7% Mansi lived in cities in 1979 and 32.5% in 1989; and 7.5 % Iamalo-Nenets lived in urban cores in 1979 and 10.6 % in 1989.[24]

---

[21]Gosudarstvennyi komitet Rossiskoi Federatsii po statistike, *Demograficheskii Ezhegodnik Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1993* (Moscow, 1994), 24

[22]Ibid., 22, 24.

[23]Bond, et. al., ""Panel on Siberia: Economic and Territorial Issues," 373.

[24]Goskomstat RSFSR Tiumenskoe Oblastnoe Upravlenie Statistiki, *Sostav Naselenia Narodov Severa po Itogam Vsesoiuznoi Perepisi Naselenia* (Tiumen', 1989), 3-16.

Table 5.2: Percentage of Urban Populations in Russia from 1926-1994[25]

	1926	*1939*	*1959*	*1979*	*1989*	*1995*
Russia	17.7	33.5	52.4	69.3	73.6	73
West Siberia	11.8	28.9	50.9	77.7	72.8	70.9
Tiumen' Oblast'	10.6	17.8	31.7	60.9	76.1	76.1
Khanty-Mansiisk AO	6.9	8.6	27	78.3	90.9	91.5
Iamalo-Nenets AO	-	26.6	35	50.6	77.9	82.9

The rapid rate of urbanization of Native territory is not mirrored by the urbanization of the Native population. While the Native urban population is much smaller than the non-Native urban population, it is evident that land and territorial use is predominantly by the non-native population. The result is that the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets live in poverty, not being able to conduct traditional economic and social activities while their traditional territory is subjected to both Russian and Western intrusions. At present, "[I]n the economic balance of the region, the production generated by the indigenous northerners,... has become almost unnoticeable against the huge industrial capacity. The situation in the Khanty-Mansi autonomous region is quite typical for all the North."[26]

---

[25]Gosudarstvennyi komitet Rossiskoi Federatsii po statistike, *Demograficheskii ezhegodnik Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1993* , (Moscow, 1993), 22, 24; and Ibid., *Demograficheskii ezhegodnik Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1995*, (Moscow, 1995), 22, 25

[26]A. Pika and B Prokhorov, "Bol'shiye problemy malykh narodov [The big problems of small peoples]," *Kommunist* 16 (1988):16-83, trans. "Soviet Union: The Big Problems of Small Ethnic Groups," *IWGIA Newsletter* no. 57 (May 1989): 123-135.

The social and environmental situation in Northwest Siberia is reflected in letters to local party and government officials. For example, by the late 1970s a Khanty fisher, S.P. Medikin from the small village of Posnokort in Mikoianovsk region, wrote the Tiumen' Oblast' government and Communist Party outlining his concerns regarding language and culture loss, environmental problems and fear over what oil and gas development would do to the Khanty-Mansiisk region. He observed that his children were losing their ability to communicate in Khanty and that as his grandchildren lived in urban centres such as Leningrad they were even further removed from Khanty language and culture. Medikin also noted that their hunting and fishing grounds had diminished, and their hunting rights had become severely restricted.[27] Although, Medikin chose to speak from his personal experience, he often generalized and spoke for the Khanty and Mansi community as a whole. Even in the late 1970s the problem of modernization had penetrated the small remote villages of Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Okrug so deeply that the loss of language and the traditional economies were commonplace. Medikin, born in 1927, proudly states that he speaks Khanty but outlines clearly the negligible use of both Khanty and Mansi in schools and at home, with the youth opting to be educated in Russian so that they may go to Universities and technical schools. These practices have led to severe depopulation of already sparsely populated villages of the far North, and further economic decline because of lack of industries and workers. The pattern of language loss, Medikin argues, began shortly after the Second World War. The solutions he proposes echo some of those proposed by indigenous leaders of Siberia today: the education of Khanty and Mansi children in their respective languages, but also education in their respective traditional lifestyles, work and future plans. This reeducation would be attained by building more boarding schools that would teach in the Native languages and by printing stories about the Khanty and Mansi Native peoples in newspapers and producing television shows about their lives and their various accomplishments as fishers, foresters and oil workers.[28] The appeal by a Khanty to the executive committee and the

---

[27]S.P. Medikin, "Dorogaia redaktsia" (A letter to the Khanty-Mansiisk regional executive committee and Party), Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv, Tiumenskoi Oblasti, Fond 814, Opis' 1, Delo 5920, 1979, 49-52.

[28]Medikin, l. 52.

Party of Khanty-Mansiisk region is in itself remarkable especially considering that Medikin made it in 1979 when not even academics were openly discussing the situation in the North and Siberia. The letter points to the dismay of one Khant and how he has been relegated to the role of the *other* in Russia, as Medikin argues "Native Khanty toil equally with everyone, but of this no one hears."[29] We glean from the letter that while education in the Native language and promotion of traditions are important, what is most important for Medikin, and other Khanty and Mansi is the recognition of their significant participation in Soviet society.

Another letter written a decade later echoed and augmented Medikin's grievances in much stronger terms. Taking the opportunity provided by the more tolerant atmosphere permitted under the Gorbachev regime, the Native inhabitants of Varyegan, located in the extremely oil-rich Nizhnevartovsk Raion sent a letter of protest along with 125 signatures to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Unlike Medikin's reserved letter, the petition sent in 1989 boldly argued that Native lands had undergone "barbaric destruction" at the hands of industrialists exploiting the natural resources of the region, namely oil and gas.[30] It spoke not only of language loss and rights to traditional economic practices, but also about the enforced removal of Natives from their own territory and their displacement by oil and gas workers. Moreover, in cases where the Native Khanty and Iamalo-Nenets were not forced out, the intensity of exploration and drilling for oil and gas just fifty kilometres from Native settlements compelled them to abandon their land and the burial grounds of their ancestors. The grievances of the Native settlers relate directly to the enormity of the infrastructure of the oil and gas industry in Northwest Siberia. Indeed, the region in which these Native Khanty and Iamalo-Nenets live is at the heart of the largest oil producing field in Northwest Siberia, even though the oil production in Nizhnevartovsk was in decline by 1989.[31]

---

[29]Ibid.

[30]"Ot korennykh zhitelei, khantov i nentsev, rybakov-okhotnikov, detei byvshykh olenevodov poselka Varyegan, Tiumenskoi oblasti, Khanty-Mansiiskogo okruga, Nizhnevartovskogo raiona, 'Obrashchenie,'" (An appeal sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party regarding interethnic relations), 5 April 1989, 1-10.

[31]Matthew J. Sagers, "News Notes," *Soviet Geography* 32, no. 4 (April 1991): 251-290.

The Khanty petitioners from Varyegan maintained that oil and gas workers had no respect for the land and the environment on which Natives rely for their livelihood. The letter cites the declining numbers in the sable population and that of other wild animals. Very similar to Medikin's appeal of ten years earlier, the Khanty and Iamalo-Nenets of Varyegan declared that the disappearing wildlife, fish and vegetation from the Northwest Siberian plains called into question the ability of Natives to be Natives. They argued: "[W]e will not have land. We will not have hunting grounds, we will not have reindeer pastures, we will not have anywhere to fish... As our elders say: 'Nenets have stopped being Nenets and Khanty have stopped being Khanty.'"[32]

The situation described by these settlers reflects the extreme impact of the oil and gas enterprises in Northwest Siberia as a whole. Besides the forced removal of Native settlers from their homes and the discrepancy in earnings between oil and gas workers and the Native population, these problems were exacerbated by the disharmony and interethnic tensions caused by the development of the oil and gas industry. There is also a clear sense that their regional government representative betrayed them by giving no indication in the five-year plan of the exploitation of a new oil reserves in their region.[33] Indeed this is a prevalent complaint among indigenous peoples interviewed in the Konda and Tazovskii regions who feel that local administrators and government officials are profiting from the extraction and sale of oil and gas in Tiumen' Oblast. Most of those interviewed questioned why the wealth generated by the oil and gas enterprises has not resulted in a better standard of living for the indigenous villagers and settlers who have seen their traditional lands devastated by the oil and gas industry.[34]

The modernization and industrialization of the Natives of Northwest Siberia and their traditional territories did not lead to a better life and a better standard of living (either in the Russian or the Native definition) as Marxism-

---

[32]Ibid., 4-5.

[33]"Ot korennykh zhitelei," 3.

[34]Interviews by the author were conducted in the Konda villages of Listvenichnyi, Leiushi, and Shugur in July and August of 1993; and in Tazovskii Raion in the village of Tibei Salei and town of Tazovskii in July and August of 1994.

Leninism had promised, even if it made them citizens of the Soviet state. Rather it has led to cultural decline, hardship and a fall in their standard of living. Moreover, this industrial exploitation of Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets land has concurrently led to the exploitation of those who decide to stay and work in the urban centres, or even those who may just live around sources of oil and gas.[35] This is evident in a petition from the Native settlers of Varyegan in Nizhnevartovsk Raion, which argued that the exploitation of oil and gas resources had led to the "insulting wage differential between oil men and Native settlers."[36] In the late 1980s, "[E]thnographers [were] alarmed by the crisis they discern among native Siberians, whose living conditions are acknowledged to be the worst in the USSR."[37] An interview with an executive of the Salekhard city government revealed that Iamalo-Nenets living within sight of the city live in squalid conditions. Most of these Iamalo-Nenets prefer to live in skin tents or *chums* (pronounced chooms) and to practice their traditional economies, but for most owning reindeer has not been possible, and hunting and fishing cannot sustain them as rivers and lakes become more polluted, and hunting and gathering grounds are overtaken by oil and gas development. Therefore, many Iamalo-Nenets living near Salekhard appeal for government assistance, despite the wealth of oil and gas on their territories.[38]

Soviet population specialists Aleksandr Pika and Boris Prokhorov assert that among the population of Siberia less than 43 percent of "the working-age population...is engaged in the traditional occupations of hunting, fishing, and reindeer husbandry, as compared to 70 percent thirty years ago."[39] The research and field work I conducted in the summers of 1993 and 1994 in Northwest Siberia indicate that the situation for the Khanty, Iamalo-Nenets and especially

---

[35]See Eremei Aipin, "Not by oil alone," 137-43.

[36]Ot korennykh zhitelei, 4.

[37]Kathleen Mihalisko, "SOS for Native Peoples of the Soviet North" *Report on the USSR* (3 February 1989): 3-6.

[38]Interview with Tamara Georgievna Ananeva, Director for Social Problems, Salekhard City Administration, Salekhard, Tiumen' Oblast', April 1995, Prince George, B.C., Canada.

[39]Mihalisko, "SOS for Native Peoples of the Soviet North", 4.

the Mansi is much worse than for other Siberians.[40] It was very difficult to find those who still practice fishing, hunting and reindeer herding as part of their social and economic organization or outside of the collectivized context, even in relatively remote areas. The decline of the native traditional economies is staggering, especially when it is evident that these traditional forms of labour are being replaced by non-traditional ones. This is still very much the case, even with the dismantling of the Soviet Union.

Those who choose to keep the traditional forms of labour cannot freely hunt or herd reindeer as they did in the past. Rather, they are assigned residence areas called "national settlements"[41] and, as in the past, people are usually placed in the confined settings of the *sovkhoz*. Indeed the impact of such enforced settlement is crippling to the Natives of Siberia. Soviet policies regarding the industrialization of the North and its population tried to force a new identity upon the Natives of Northwest Siberia. Soviet citizenship required them to become the industrialized Soviets that the Marxist-Leninist doctrines prescribed, no matter how unsuccessful the outcome. Towards the end of the 1980s, as oil and gas development declined further, and as the promise of a socialist utopia appeared more elusive than when the experiment began, industrialization could no longer provide sustenance for the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, nor could it confirm the illusion of progress. And today, still grappling with the Soviet legacy, the *sovkhozy* themselves can no longer provide many Natives in Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskii Autonomous Okrugs with income to allow them to sustain a decent standard of living.

By the late 1980s, the Northwest Siberian plains, the traditional territories of the Khanty, Mansi, Iamalo-Nenets and several other indigenous peoples were already completely transformed and re-identified and re-invented for resource extraction and industrial use, rendering the land in severe environmental peril. The ecological destruction and environmental pollution in the region were of massive proportions. By the early 1990s, the press in the Soviet Union and then the Russian Republic candidly reported the pollution about which indigenous

---

[40]From late July to mid-August 1993, I conducted interviews with several Mansi in the villages of Listvenichnyi, Leushi and Shugur in the Konda region of Tiumen' Oblast', and in the summer of 1994, I conducted interviews with Iamalo-Nenets of Tazovskii Raion.

[41]Mihalisko, "SOS for Native Peoples of the Soviet North", 4.

peoples bitterly complained. Industrial enterprises dumped huge quantities of heavy metals and cities directed sewage into the rivers Ob' and Irtysh in Northwest Siberia. For example, various fish on which Natives of the Berezovskii region rely had diminished in numbers from 1/20 to 1/100 of previous levels in the period since oil and gas development began in the early 1960s.[42] Intense exploration and wide prospecting for oil and gas reserves polluted rivers, river basins and lakes putting into jeopardy fish processing operations.[43] Additionally, the frequent occurrences of catastrophic gas field fires because of careless exploration and extraction practices destroyed and continue to destroy grazing and pasture lands for reindeer herds and forests inhabited by wild animals.[44] This left Natives contending that not only does this ecological degradation threaten their sources of food and trade, it also threatens a major component of their traditional lifestyle.

Reports in the early 1990s suggested much of the pollution came from the use of inferior equipment in the drilling and extraction of oil, as well as its transport through oil pipelines. In 1991, *Pravda*, citing an interview with the Chief Administration for Petroleum Transport and Delivery and Central Dispatching Administration, reported that there "were more than 900 accidents involving oil field pipeline in Western Siberia in the first four months of this year."[45] Moreover, the representative for the administration monitoring pipeline operations suggested that such accidents were on the rise. Long tracts of pipeline in disrepair and requiring replacement lay at the heart of this massive environmental damage. The problem faced by the oil and gas industry with regard to increasing inefficiency and general breakdown is systemic. Other industrial sectors failed to deliver 123,000 tons of pipe in the first four months of 1991 leading to the massive oil spills as the oil industry attempted to meet its

---

[42]A. Khersonskii, "Mertvaia voda velikoi reki," *Severnye Prostory*, no. 42 (June 1991): 10-11. Khersonskii asserts that the industrial factories in the city of Omsk dumped tonnes of metals such as chromium, copper, lead, iron, cadmium, nickel and zinc into the River Ob' in 1989 alone.

[43]S. Revina, "Trevogi nashei: vnushaet ser'eznye opasenia," *Severnye Prostory*, no. 37 (January 1991): 11-12.

[44]Khersonskii, "Mertvaia voda velikoi reki, 11:

[45]"An Environmental Disaster?" *Pravda* (31 May 1991): 4. Translated in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 43, no. 22 (1991): 26.

own deliveries. Exacerbating this was the pollution caused by the efforts to clean up the oil spills. Much of Northwest Siberia is swampland making it very difficult to clean oil spills, so the solution has been to "burn oil-soaked ground and later reclaim the area,"[46] resulting in air pollution. Burning oil in the fields of Northwest Siberia is all too common an occurrence, whether by accident or by design, prompting one journalist to write "clouds cry oil."[47]

The identity of the indigenous peoples living in Northwest Siberia is integral to the environment in which they live. For the Natives of Siberia, the land represents their livelihood and spirituality as it traditionally gave them their subsistence needs in the form of fishing, hunting, reindeer-herding, and berry-picking activities. Pollution and degradation of this fragile environment and land call into question their survival and their identity as Natives. The interviews of Natives, as well as the complaints and petitions by Native settlers and villagers, forthrightly attest that land is the most important element in the maintenance of their traditions and their culture as indigenous peoples. Land use and rights define Siberian Native peoples' struggle to survive as indigenous peoples in Northwest Siberia. Proposals from Native leaders on laws and regulations regarding land use and rights are abundant,[48] but the shadow of oil and gas renders this fight a most formidable one as the Russian government claims that oil and gas make Russia a viable nation-state.

The Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets are caught "betwixt and between." They desire to recapture and maintain their lost traditions and lifeways, but find it exceedingly difficult to do so within the confines of late-twentieth century Russian economic development. Soviet indoctrination taught them to forget their traditions, their languages, their cultures and their ways of life. In exchange, they were taught how to be Russian, how to speak Russian, and how to think Soviet. With the collapse of the Soviet system and with the environmental damage done to their territories because of oil and gas

---

[46]An Environmental Disaster?, 4.

[47]Khersonskii, "Mertvaia voda velikoi reki," 11.

[48]See for example Iu. Afanas'ev, "Synsko-Boikarskaya Etnicheskaya Territoria, Shuryshkarskogo Raiona s osobym rezhimom prirodopol'zovaniya," *Severnye Prostory* no. 13 (14 January 1994), 1-9.

development, these Natives are hard-pressed to find a way to again practice their traditional cultures, to speak their native tongues and to pursue their traditional economies.

It is realities such as these that have led native elites to call for a "reawakening" and a "revival" of Native traditions. Native elites use the rhetoric of nationalism in order to emphasize their pleas, contending that their lives, economies, politics and social organization were far better before colonization. Indeed, the constitution of the Iamal-Potomkam, the association advancing the claims of the Iamalo-Nenets, uses the term "national consciousness" in its mandate.[49] It is evident that the Iamalo-Nenets elders feel that it is only by emphasizing their parity with the Russian nation that they may have a chance to argue for their rights as a people. While these ideas of "national consciousness" are very real and pervasive in the rhetoric of indigenous elites, they are largely confined to the elite level of Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets societies. Native elites are aware that the Soviet legacy of socialist culture[50] and Marxism-Leninism are perhaps indelibly stamped on their culture and society. Conversations with Mansi, Iamal-Nenets and Khanty elites and non-elites suggest that the basis of their cultural and social organization can be directly traced to what was learned under the Soviet regime. Non-elites longed for the days of stability of the Soviet period and of the past when they did not have to worry about their future. It was often said with apparent sadness that "I don't have enough to buy food," or "my pension cannot keep up with inflation" under

---

[49]The Russian term used is "natsional'noe samosoznanie." "Ustav Assotsiatii korennykh narodov Severa Iamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga (respubliki) 'IAMAL-POTOMKAM!'" (Salekhard, 1991), 2. The mandate of the Spasenie Iugri, the association representing the Khanty and Mansi uses very similar language. See "Programma Assotsiatsii 'Spasenie Iugri'," *Leninskaia Pravda* (20 July 1989), 6.

[50]This is illustrated by Native leaders whom I interviewed who stated that the Soviet state had convinced many of their people that they were progressing towards a socialist paradise measured by the construction of schools, cultural clubs and health care for all, but without the attention paid to indigenous cultures, languages and social organization. Vladimir Kogontchin, Head of National Khant Obshchina in Ugut and Petr Moldanov, Chairman of National Khant Obshchina in the Surgut region. Interviews and conversations conducted in Prince George, B.C., Canada between 25-29 May 1996. See also Vladimir Sangi's statements in "Native Northern Peoples Eye Their Rights," 20-21.

the ongoing reforms.[51] The aim of Native elites and intelligentsia is to recreate, reinvent and remember a history and a past that appears to be better than their present and their future. By summoning memories and feelings of affiliation, and even patriotism towards one's traditions and culture in order to establish or symbolize "social cohesion or the membership of groups, [and] real or artificial communities,"[52] cultural preservation and survival *seems* possible.

Indigenous response: the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets in search of a new identity

The battle for control of resources and territories between the centre and the periphery, together with the decline of cultures, traditions and the environment have led the Khanty, Mansi and Nenets to assert their place within the new Russia. This assertion of place, of existence, is rooted in an attempt to define who they are and how they fit within the state-building mandate of Russia. Defining themselves as distinctly indigenous means remembering, recreating and reinventing their histories and it also means that they can be in a political position of strength when vying for land claims and territorial rights. With the infringement of their lands by the Russian government and the Russian and foreign industrial companies, combined with a growing and influential intelligentsia and elite, a strong desire has arisen among the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets educated and elites to revive and remember their traditional cultures, languages and way of life. Having experienced the paternalistic rule of the Soviet government and the destruction brought on by industrial development, Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets leaders are beginning to realize the need to maintain their territory and to govern their own lands and resources. The question that arises is how is this to be done? With populations that number between 1 to 6 percent of the larger non-native populations in Northwest Siberia, the task is a difficult one. Again, indigenous elites have distinguished themselves from the dominant Russian culture and interests. Frederick Barth

---

[51]Interviews with Mansi in the Summer of 1993 in the Konda region; interviews with Iamal-Nenets in the Summer of 1994 in the Tazovskii region; and interviews with two Khanty Native leaders in the Summer of 1996 in Prince George, B.C.

[52]Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, 9.

postulates that it is conflict or what he terms "dichotomized ethnic statuses" that maintains the cultural differences "despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence."[53] Indeed, Barth argues that the close geographic proximity of different ethnic groups to each other serves "to be a factor encouraging the proliferation of cultural differentiae."[54] I argue, moreover, that, for the indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia, these cultures and traditions have had to be re-invented and invented in order for them to differentiate themselves from dominant ethnic groups around them, namely European Slavs. As Hobsbawm suggests, invention necessarily stems from a linkage (a memory) of the past from which the invention arises.[55] The thing newly created or invented comes from an attempt to break away from the prevailing order, identity or lack thereof. Far from being static, they are dynamic constructs that serve the needs of survival of cultures, languages and traditions threatened with extinction.

It is, then, vitally important to many Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets elites to maintain and continue their ethnicity and their culture, since their survival as a people can only be ensured, not by the paternalism which led to the start of their demise, but rather through the propagation and promotion of their way of life as superior, or at the very least equal, to the hegemonic polities and societies to which they have been subjugated.[56] To a great extent, in order to do this, these indigenous elites create memories and imagine their connection to other communities similar to their own. The awakening of ethnic, even national consciousness is inextricably intertwined with the politicization of native elites of Siberia, a legacy of Soviet nationality policies.[57]

The irony, however, is that it is not only land that has been industrialized, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets themselves have been industrialized. The

---

[53]Frederik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Group and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 10.

[54]Ibid., 207.

[55]Hobsbawm, 6.

[56]See Max Weber, *Economy and Society* Volume 1 (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968).

[57]Theresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "The Dialectics of Nationalism in the USSR," in *The Soviet Nationality Reader: the disintegration in context*, ed. Rachel Denber (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 403-05.

education and the industrial development imported to the Siberian tundra and taiga was in the framework of Slavic European development. The occupations practiced by the majority of Natives in Northwest Siberia for the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets indigenous peoples fell into the Soviet defined categories of intellectual work and physical labour. Intellectual (*umstvennyi*) work had a number of categories from supervisory positions in the government to technical engineers, artists, teachers, medical workers and cultural workers.[58] Physical labour was categorized as work in hard labour, peat mining, machine and metal work, and fishing, fish processing and hunting. The struggle for Natives is to find compromises that would accommodate the modern Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets and yet still allow them to practice and maintain their culture and traditions if they so choose.

Another source of survival and preservation is what some post-Soviet academics have termed neo-traditionalism. While for the ordinary native, neo-traditionalism has meant a return to traditional economies or hunting, fishing and reindeer herding in order to subsist in an uncertain economy,[59] for indigenous elites the concept of neo-traditionalism means "a guaranteed return to an aboriginal essence,"[60] something more pure, untrammeled by the Soviet socialist experiment and modernization. This return is a "'rediscovering'" of "something deep down always known,"[61] in order to create national feeling where it does not exist. Native leaders realize that in order to fertilize the rediscovery of their glorious and somehow more perfect past, it is crucial for them to educate their peoples in their Native languages, cultures, lifeways, traditions and histories. Hence, demands for national schools teaching in the

---

[58]See in particular "Raspredelenie naselenia otdelnykh natsional'nostei po zaniatiam. Khanty-Mansiiskii avtonomnyi okrug," in Goskomstat RSFSR Tiumenskoe Oblastnoe Upravlenie Statistiki, *Sostav naselenia narodov Severa po itogam Vsesoiuznoi Perepisi Naselenia* (Tiumen', 1989), 37-58.

[59]Aleksandr Pika and B.B. Prokhorov, *Neotraditsionalizm na Rossiiskom Severe i gosudarstvennaia regional'naia politika*, (Moscow, 1994). See also Gail Fondahl, "The Status of Indigenous Peoples in the Russian North," *Post-Soviet Geography*, vol. XXXVI, no. 4 (April 1995): 215-224.

[60]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* , Revised Edition (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 195.

[61]Ibid., 196.

Native languages is one of the dominant themes in the discourse between Native elites and the Russian government.[62] Leaders such as Eremei Aipin, a Khanty poet and the President of the Association of the Numerically-Small Peoples of the North, and Sergei Khariuchi, the Deputy for National Questions in the Iamalo-Nenetskii Autonomous Region, were also well aware that institutional infrastures were vitally necessary for the initiation and continuance of these remembered and recreated histories and memories. Aipin proposes the establishment of museums and reservations as one solution to bringing the Khanty back to a healthier environment to conduct "folkloric festivals, peoples' concerts and art displays."[63] Yuvan Shestalov echoed this five years later.[64] The question that remains to be answered is what form Native traditions and history will take within an economically and socially beleaguered new Russia.

At the height of this imagination and invention is the profound paradox that the Khanty and Mansi seek the protection of reservations in order to preserve their way of life. Although reservations elicit pejorative connotations, especially in the West, the Khanty and Mansi believe that the designation of reservations, based on the North American model, would lead to a preservation of the territory and, thus, the Khanty and Mansi ethnos. It is the definition of this ethnos that is still in question however. Having seen the destructive nature of industrial development in Northwest Siberia and the apparent road to extinction which it brings, the Khanty and Mansi postulate a solution that suggests a heightened awareness of their precarious situation within the Russian polity which is informed by Native elites' need to demarcate, to form boundaries imagined and invented.

Writer Oksana Petrunenko argues that the idea of establishing a reservation may improve their situation. "Ethnographers, philosophers, lawyers and cultural experts also supported the idea of setting up an ethnic territory or a

---

[62]See Eremei Aipin, "Za 'paradnymi' razgovorami," *Literaturnaia Rossia* 3, no. 46 (18 November 1988): 3; A. Ushakov, "Predlozhenie," (A letter outlining the mandate of Spasenie Iugri and Iamal-Potomkam to Ch. M. Taksami , the Organizational Committee of the Congress of the Small Peoples of the North.) January 1990, 1-3; and Sergei Khariuchi, "My luchshie znaem, kak nam zhit,'" *Iamalskii Meridian*, no. 1 (September 1992): 6-7.

[63]Aipin, "Za 'paradnymi' razgovorami," 3.

[64]Iuvan Shestalov, "Khanty. Mansi. Kto my?" 7-10.

reservation," corresponding to the "international agreements on the rights of peoples leading a traditional way of life."[65] The reservation they seek would protect their land and their people from the negative impact of industrialization of the region, because "priority is to be given to the traditional crafts, hunting and fishing. As on any reservation, the number of outsiders, such as tourists, builders and oil workers, will be sharply limited. The prospecting parties working there will move elsewhere.[66] While indigenous northerners see North American type reservations as the answer to their woes, it is clear that Khanty and Mansi natives have not thought of the many disadvantages of establishing reservations such as the capital necessary to operate such reservations, or the attendant need to once again relocate natives from where they live to the designated reservations. Nevertheless, in 1989, one-third of the Khanty-Mansi territory was declared a reservation, and all logging and industrial development was to be stopped within this 100,000 square kilometre reserve. However, much as it was in the Soviet period, the mandated reserve exists only on paper. With Russia in the throes of economic hardship, with oil and gas being its most valuable commodities the designation of this preserve is not enforced, and prospecting and extraction persist.

The Iamalo-Nenets also wish to preserve their language and their traditions. Sergei Khariuchi, at the time the leader for the Iamalo-Nenets Ntive association, Iamal Potomkam, has argued that Iamalo-Nenets and others must be given the opportunity to take part in "the revival and development of their language, culture, traditions, customs and production."[67] According to Khariuchi, the Russian government must pay closer attention to nationalities politics as it was their past mistakes and policies that led to the problems that the Iamalo-Nenets face. Khariuchi contends that "internationalism" and "Friendships of Peoples" were empty slogans and promises that did not improve either relations between peoples or the lives of the Iamalo-Nenets.[68] He

---

[65]Oksana Petronenko, "A Soviet Reservation? Yes!" *IWGIA Newsletter* (no. 1, July/August 1991): 40-41.

[66]Ibid.

[67]Khariuchi, "My luchshie znaem, kak nam zhit,'" 7.

[68]Ibid., 6.

suggests that the "national problem" will be solved only when the government in Moscow realizes that nationalities politics cannot be "isolated from the political and economic questions." Furthermore, problems of culture and religion may only be solved with the close coordination between national minorities and the central government.[69]

Beyond the political coordination between the minorities of Siberia and the Russian government, indigenous elites suggest that because the oil and gas are on their traditional lands, they must have a say in economic development as well, and in how these commodities should be developed and marketed. Natives question why they have not benefited materially from the oil and gas industry.[70] The Khanty writer Eremei Aipin, who was then a Peoples' Deputy of the U.S.S.R., questioned why the valuable oil being extracted from his peoples' land was being sold at below the world market value inside and outside of the country. Aipin thought that selling oil at its world market price would benefit not only his people and his region, but also all of Russia.[71] Writing in 1991, Aipin was at a loss to explain why, with the oil industry operating at a deficit of 700 million rubles per year, oil from Russia sold at 65 rubles per tonne, while world market prices were at 258 dollars per tonne. Aipin admits that Northwest Siberia was the wealthiest region in all the Russian Republic, with the development of housing occurring at an incredible pace in an attempt to keep up with the migration of oil workers from European Russia. He also noted that as much as 99% of oil industry profits went to the central ministries and the small remainder to the local administration. He demanded a greater devolution of profits and powers from the centre so that local officials and leaders had autonomy over their resources and decision-making.[72] While there has been some devolution of powers from Moscow to the regional governments since Aipin's 1991 article, the authority acquired by indigenous elites has not given them the power to influence the oil and gas industry. Khanty and Iamalo-Nenets families in the

---

[69]Ibid., 7.

[70]See Pika and Prokhorov, "Bol'shie problemy malykh narodov, 123-135.

[71]Eremei Aipin, "Idet bezzastenyivyi grabiozh," *Severnye Prostory*, no. 37 (January 1991), 3.

[72]Ibid., 3. Aipin asserts that only 1% of profits from oil and gas stay in Tiumen' Oblast'.

area around Salekhard and Surgut are still being displaced. Private and state-run oil and gas companies often offer a meager lump sum of money in return for their land.[73] This presents a great deal of tension between Natives who want to hold on to their land in the hopes of creating *obschiny* (self-governing communities) and those who have already given it up. For indigenous elites in Northwest Siberia, the answer is in the creation of laws on nature and land use that has substance beyond the written word.[74] Since there is no open dialogue between the oil and gas industries and the Native people with whom they are dealing, more often than not, those who give up their lands to oil interests do so without the full understanding of the contract signed with the oil or gas company.[75] Pitted against, and confused by the urban savvy of oil and gas industrialists, some Khanty families have given title and rights to their lands in exchange for a brand new snowmobile or motor boat.[76]

Indisputably, the modern Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets culture and ethnicity no longer exist in the form that they were at pre-contact with Russians in the Imperial period. However, the attempts to imagine, recreate and reinvent traditional customs, way of life and environment are strong among indigenous elites. With the policies of glasnost and perestroika introduced by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union in 1985, and then the Union's subsequent collapse, Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets elites have become politically empowered because of the devolution of authority from the centre to the periphery. Concurrently, the managers of the oil and gas industry in the Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskii autonomous regions have also gained more political control. Using

---

[73]Interviews with Tamara Georgiyevna Ananeva, Director for Social Problems, Salekhard City Administration, Salekhard, Tiumen' Oblast, April 1995 and Petr Moldanov, Chairman of National Khant Obshchina in the Surgut region, 25-29 May 1996, both in Prince George, B.C., Canada .

[74]"Rossiu Reformy: obrashchenie sobrania predstavitelei natsional'noi intelligentsii Khanty-Mansiiskogo Avtonomnogo Okruga k VII s'ezdu narodnykh deputatov Rossii," *Severnye Prostory*, no. 1-2 (January-February, 1993): 20.

[75]Interview with Petr Moldanov, Chairman of National Khant Obshchina in the Surgut region, 25-29 May 1996, in Prince George, B.C., Canada. It is interesting to note that Petr Moldanov is also the General Director dealing with the Native Population at Surgutneftigaz (Surgut Oil and Gas company).

[76]Ibid.

this opportunity to voice their political concerns, these indigenous elites have mobilized the resources at their disposal to place their demands on the political agenda of the Russian government.

The creation of such organizations as the Association for the Small Peoples of the North in 1989, at one time headed by the Khanty writer Eremei Aipin is one form of this new politicization. The Association advocates the protection of Native rights and resources in accordance with the United Nations' mandate regarding indigenous peoples, including an effort to preserve the environment to which their traditional economies and cultures are intrinsically tied. The association seeks to promote Native peoples' governance of themselves and their territories.[77] Local-level associations formed another means by which Natives joined the political arena. The Khanty and Mansi formed *Spasenie Iugri* (*Salvation of the Ugra*) and the Iamalo-Nenets, *Iamal-Potomkam* (*Iamal for Future Generations*). Both assert political mandates that strongly advance the return to, if not the preservation of, traditional culture, language and economies of native peoples. Indeed, while each association has a different way to achieve its aims, both see that the way to preserving and developing their peoples is by asserting themselves as indigenous peoples, with special land and resource rights under international law.[78] Therefore, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets are reformulating their identity from Soviet citizens to indigenous peoples with distinct rights, indeed as global citizens.

However, both organizations have run into problems. In the case of *Iamal-Potomkam*, the problem, as Norman A. Chance and Elena N. Andreeva assert, is that with scant political experience and "no recognized legal base, its political power is severely limited."[79] Concerning *Spassenie Iugri*, interviews with Native villagers indicated that as there was no coordination between the head office in Khanty-Mansiisk city and the smaller villages, there was therefore

---

[77]See "Indigenous Peoples of the Soviet North," *IWGIA Document*, No. 67 (July 1990).

[78]See "Programma Assotsiatsii 'Spasenie Iugri,'" *Leninskaya Pravda* 20 July 1989, 6; and Iamal-Potomkam, *Ustav: Assotsiatsii korennykh narodov Severa Iamalo-Nenetskii avtonomnogo okruga (respubliki) "Iamal-Potomkam!"* (Salekhard, 31 January 1991).

[79]Norman A. Chance and Elena N. Andreeva, "Sustainability, Equity and Natural Resource Development in Northwest Siberia and Arctic Alaska," *Human Ecology* 23, no. 2 (1995): 217-240.

a great deal of resentment and skepticism that the association would do anything for the local Natives. Many intimated that members of the upper-level elites, such as Eremei Aipin, were aloof from the people.[80] When asked about their Native leaders, the retort from the Mansi villagers interviewed indicated that they knew little about figures such as Aipin and saw no connection between his activities in Moscow and their need for higher pensions or a *banya* (a Russian sauna) in their small village.[81]

Representation at the national, regional and local levels of government is important for indigenous elites and non-elites alike. As Khariuchi has stated, Natives are looking for the close collaboration of all levels of governments with Native groups and associations addressing the cultural, social, economic and religious needs of Natives, along with the larger economic and political concerns of the Russian government. Harking back to the letter from the Khanty and Iamalo-Nenets settlers written in 1989, one of their main demands was representation at all levels of government, especially when it comes to representing their interests against the interests of the oil and gas industry.[82] The election of the indigenous Khanty leader Eremei Aipin to the People's Deputies of the Russian parliament and the proliferation of local Native leaders are steps towards this, even if non-elites feel that their representatives are not speaking for them. Native peoples are seeking to place representatives in the Russian Parliament to address Moscow on its own terms.[83] That a Iamal-Nenets representative fighting for the rights of Iamal-Nenets is a member of the Iamalo-Nenetskii Autonomous Region government is also indicative of increasing politicization.

---

[80]Interview conducted with Mansi Natives in Listvenichnyi in the Summer of 1993. These sentiments were echoed by two lower-lever Khant elites, Vladimir Kogontchin, Head of National Khant Obshchina in Ugut and Petr Moldanov, Chairman of National Khant Obshchina in the Surgut region. Interviews and conversations conducted in Prince George, B.C., Canada between 25-29 May 1996.

[81]Interviews conducted by author in Leushi and Listvenichnyi in the Summer of 1993.

[82]Ot korennykh zhitelei, 4.

[83]See Eremei Aipin, "Not by Oil Alone," and "U.S.S.R.: Road of Discord," *IWGIA Newsletter*, no. 1 (July/August 1991), 36-39. Eremei Aipin was not reelected to the Duma in the elections of 1996 and as of Summer 1997 is also no longer President of the Association of the Numerically-Small Peoples of the North.

With the petitions to governmental and non-governmental agencies, and the attempts to acquaint the public with the concerns of Native peoples, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets have endeavored to gain support from governmental and non-governmental agencies. While the Soviet state's and, now, the Russian Federation's recognition of them as indigenous peoples has become a prerequisite towards putting their concerns on the federal political agenda, the central government lacks the political will to give power to these Native peoples. Despite making up only 1-2 percent of the entire Tiumen' Oblast' population, what Natives want is special status as indigenous peoples as mandated by the United Nations so that they can be given a voice and power within the larger Russian state. Since Russia relies on Northwest Siberian oil and gas for between 66 and 70%[84] of its energy needs (see Table 5.2) and foreign currency revenues, the requirements of the Khanty, Mansi, Iamalo-Nenets and the environment in which they live is a low priority for the Yeltsin government. This is most strikingly evident in a presidential *ukaz* (decree) issued by Yeltsin in 1991.[85] The *ukaz* begins by listing the priority of development in Tiumen' Oblast' and not surprisingly, oil and gas takes precedence over all other types of development, economic and social. Yeltsin emphasized the importance of establishing the "efficient use and reproduction" of hydrocarbon resources and the "heightened full use of natural gas and gas condensates."[86] While the concerns of indigenous peoples in Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenetskyi regions were taken into consideration, notably with regard to the environment, it is evident that the oil and gas industries would not support any development of fisheries, hunting, reindeer herding and other traditional activities, thus obfuscating the urgent demands of indigenous peoples regarding the environmental degradation of their lands. Five years later, with the Russian economy in the depths of depression, Yeltsin's directives about making the oil and gas industry more efficient and more responsible towards the environment

---

[84]Bradshaw, *Siberia at a time of Change*, 15.

[85] Boris Yeltsin, "Ukaz presidenta RFSFR o razvitii Tiumenskoi Oblasti," *Severnye Prostory*, no. 43 (July 1991): 5.

[86]Ibid.

have not materialized. The voices of Natives have not been heard over the louder and more potent exigencies of the Russian state and society.

The modern Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets culture and ethnicity are marked by assimilation into the dominant Russian culture and language. Moreover, they are also marked by Sovietization and modernization, characterized by massive industrial development. Confronted with this, the attempts to remember, imagine and invent traditional customs and ways of life grow stronger.

The election of Khanty leaders such as Eremei Aipin to the People's Deputies of the Russian parliament and the creation of organizations such as *Spasseniye Iugri* and *Iamal Potomkam* are signals that the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets are taking their fate into their own hands.[87] While this politicization of the elite may lead to the salvaging of Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets cultures and ethnicities, the reality is that it is likely too late especially for the Mansi, the majority of whom no longer speak their native tongue.

There have been some successes made by indigenous peoples in Siberia. In 1995, both the Autonomous Okrugs of Khanty-Mansiisk and Iamalo-Nenets saw legislation passed in the Autonomous Okrug Duma outlining their rights within the context of the Russian polity. The tone and language of both Statutes were generous in giving the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets guarantees of their rights as indigenous peoples "in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the present Statute, the generally accepted principles and rules of the international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation."[88] Note that while these Statutes have been passed at the Autonomous Okrug level, they have not yet passed the federal level of the Russian Parliament. While it is evident that there is legislation protecting

---

[87]Aipin, "Not by Oil Alone," and "U.S.S.R.: Road of Discord," 36-39.

[88]Ustav (Osnovnoi Zakon) Khanty-Mansiiskogo Avtonomnogo Okruga, Priniat Dumoi avtonomnogo okruga 26 Aprelia 1995g (Izvlechenie). [State (Main Law) of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, Adopted by the Duma of the Autonomous Okrug on April 26, 1995, (Excerpt). Reprinted in *Legal Status of Indigenous Peoples of Circumpolar States: materials to the Conference 26-28 February 1998.* (Moscow: People's Friendship University of Russia, 1997, 22; and Ustav (Osnovnoi Zakon) Iamalo-Nenetskogo Avtonomnogo Okruga, Priniat Dumoi avtonomnogo okruga 26 Aprelia 1995g (Izvlechenie). [State (Main Law) of the Iamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Adopted by the Duma of the Autonomous Okrug on September 19, 1995, (Excerpt), Ibid., 27.

indigenous land rights and claims and that legislation has been passed designating protected areas for traditional land use, often the federal legislations contradict and supersede whatever beneficial laws have been given to indigenous minorities.[89] Moreover, Yeltsin has failed to ratify a very important piece of legislation regarding indigenous rights, the Law on the Legal Status of Numerically Small Peoples of the North, which was actually passed by the Russian Duma twice in 1995. Yeltsin argued that the legislation required more reworking.[90] Nevertheless, the political lobbying by indigenous peoples of Siberia continues.

Another important indication of the politicization of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, and indeed other aboriginal groups in Siberia is their ongoing support of each other, a growing Pan-tribal and Super-tribal movement which goes beyond the boundaries of West Siberia and indeed Russia. The Chukchi, the Nenets, the Evenks, the Nivkh, and others have lent their support to each others' causes in the North and Siberia.[91] Moreover, these Siberian indigenous peoples have actively and strongly voiced their grievances to international groups such as the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs, as well as other indigenous groups in Canada, the United States and Australia. Here, too, there is a good bit of invention going on as Native elites elicit imagined connections from non-elites whereby the concept of community not only extends to those with whom one has an ethno-cultural and linguistic similarity, but beyond to other indigenous groups in Siberia and worldwide. While it is possible for highly educated natives such as Eremei Aipin and Sergei Khariuchi to make connections with the Lubicon Cree or the Inuit of Canada and Greenland, it is far more difficult for ordinary native villagers to imagine a connection with other Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets from different villages, let alone other peoples from other ethnic groups and other territories.

---

[89]Gail Fondahl, "Environmental Degradation and Indigenous Land Claims in Russia's North," in *Contested Arctic*, Eric Alden Smith and Joan McCarter, eds. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 81.

[90]Ibid.

[91]Kathleen Mihalisko, "Discontent in the Taiga and Tundra," *Radio Liberty Research* 296/88 (7 July 1988): 1-8.

Moreover, the results of this pan-tribalism and super-tribalism have, thus far, been cosmetic. For example, a festival celebrating indigenous peoples in Northwest Siberia in the summer of 1993, costing billions of rubles and heavily funded by the Texas-based oil and gas company Amoco, turned into a pretty, cultural display of traditional songs and dances rather than an effort to call attention to the dire situation of the cultures of the natives of Siberia. The festival was a *pokazukha*--a show, very similar to the shows and celebrations in which the former Soviet Union engaged in in order to demonstrate its apparent strength while its core was rotting. The idea of the festival, of the *pokazukha*, pervades any formal cultural expression so that Native dances become theatrical ballets, Native singing becomes operatic and Native paintings become modern art forms. These are inventions of traditions legitimized by the dominant polity's elevation of them to Russian high culture--a creation in itself. Much as in Siberia under Soviet rule and of today, festivals and formal cultural expressions functioned and function in much the same way as Clifford Geertz's description of Balinese state ceremonies, as

> metaphysical theatre; theatre designed to express a view of the ultimate nature of reality, and at the same time to shape the existing conditions of life to be consonant with the reality; that is, theatre to present an ontology, and by presenting it, to make it happen--make it actual.[92]

The gap between the *pokazukha* and the dying cultures of the Khanty, Mansi, and Iamalo-Nenets mirrors the gap between the indigenous elites and their people living in remote villages attempting to survive on a meager pension or salary, and who are concerned more with daily survival than a political voice. While the majority of those I interviewed were very supportive of indigenous representation in the parliament, and of preserving language and culture, they were more reluctant to support a journey back to their traditional way of life. The television or the snowmobile is as valuable today as sleds and reindeer were less than one hundred years ago. This assimilation into the dominant Russian

---

[92]Clifford Geertz, *Negara, the theatre state in nineteenth-century Bali*, (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1980), 104.

society is the most formidable obstacle to cultural preservation and yet, for the majority of Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, assimilation defines who they are as peoples because they have been so thoroughly Russified and Sovietized. The specter of oil and gas development and the attendant infrastructure exacerbates the problems facing both aboriginal elites and their people. And, like Walter Benjamin's Angel of History, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets of West Siberia continue to be propelled forward and the wreckage continues to pile up.

The most formidable task facing the Native peoples of Northwest Siberia, especially the Native elites, is to define what it means to be Native in a highly industrialized environment, already suffering acute ecological damage. The indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia now find that they must redefine what their relationship is and will be to the central government in Moscow, to the oblast', okrug, local administration and to the industrialists so that their interests may be voiced and acknowledged within the political and economic forces surrounding the exploitation of oil and gas resources in the region. In so doing, the indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia may ably represent themselves in the political arena at all levels of government, especially at the regional where their needs as indigenous peoples may be better considered within the context of land and resource use and rights. Only when the independent and valid concerns and needs of Khanty, Mansi, Iamalo-Nenets and other indigenous peoples are considered can there be an effective and ethical mandate formulated to bring about the co-management of resources and land use in oil and gas rich Northwest Siberia.

This is why for the Native elites, the invention of tradition in order to hearken back to an "aboriginal essence" is vital to their survival. For they know full well that they must remember, imagine and invent their traditions in order to redefine and to renegotiate the relationship between the leader and led, the colonizer and the colonized[93] in a post-colonial, post-Soviet Russia.

---

[93]Terrence Ranger, "The invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in *The Invention of Tradition*, 211-262.

Conclusion: identity politics

In May of 1996, at The Second International Working Seminar on Problems of Northern Peoples, held at the University of Northern British Columbia, I asked Vladimir Kogontchin, a Khant, whether the Khanty were a people (*narod*) or a nation (*natsia*). He smiled thoughtfully, perhaps even knowingly, and replied that he thought the Khanty were a people. Kogontchin, was then Chair of a Khant *obshchina* in the Neftyugansk region. A short time later, at the same conference, I asked Petr Moldanov, also a Khant, whether the Khanty were a people or a nation. With scarcely a thought, Moldanov answered "of course, the Khanty are a nation." Moldanov was then the Chair of a Khant *obshchina* in the Surgut region.[1] Both men were of the same generation, and both were very enthusiastic about the experiment of the concept of the *obshchina* as a tool of self-government for indigenous peoples in the Khanty-Mansiisk region and in other regions of Siberia where indigenous peoples are a significant minority. Why such different answers to such a seemingly straightforward question?

This conclusion summarizes this dissertation by interrogating how indigenous peoples have been identified throughout the colonial history of Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union and now the Russian Federation. In doing so, I describe the tools of the colonizing process: census, map and museum. Moreover, I examine questions of identity and identity politics as they pertain to the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets.

Colonization of Siberia led colonizers to identify Native peoples from the European perspective, usually to make simple and rational their administration from a political core far removed from the lives of the colonized. It also allowed them to extract and exploit resources from colonized territories with impunity in order to engage in state- and nation-building from the European core. This dissertation has attempted to show that the colonizers', Russian Imperial and

---

[1]Interviews conducted at The Second International Working Seminar on Problems of Northern Peoples, held at the University of Northern British Columbia, May 1996.

Soviet, definition of Native peoples in Siberia from *inozemsty* (foreigners) and later to *inorodtsy* (aliens) and variously *iasachnye liudi* (yasak paying people) and *inovertsy* (those without faith), and more recently, "small peoples of the North," served to categorize them into the dominant polity's Other. Benedict Anderson avers that the genealogy of official nationalism "should be traced to the imaginings of the colonial state" rather than to the "dynastic states of nineteenth-century Europe" contrary to what he had argued in the 1983 edition of his *Imagined Communities*.[2] Anderson uses Southeast Asian historical examples to substantiate these claims, and indeed there are similarities that resonate with imperialism and nation-building in Southeast Asia and in North Asia (Siberia). The difference between these geographical spaces, however, is that in order to colonize Southeast Asia, the French, the Spanish, the Dutch, the Portuguese, the British and others had to engage ships to undertake sea journeys to fairly removed places, whereas, to colonize North Asia, Russia did not have to send out ships and could travel overland and on inland rivers to journey from St. Petersburg or Leningrad to the Kamchatka Peninsula and back. North Asia was seen and still is seen as a contiguous territory of European Russia. The inference that this geographical distinction conjured prompted early colonizers, traders and Tsarist servitors to name indigenous peoples they encountered *inozemtsy*, and paradoxically, to treat them as subjects of the Russian state to be taxed and the territories they inhabited to be administered and exploited.

In the debate as to what influenced official nationalism more in the colonized worlds--the dynastic states or the imaginings of the colonial state-- in the case of North Asia, it would be more accurate to suggest the former. But, interestingly, the Russians and the Soviets used the same tools of institutions of power that Anderson identifies as characteristic of the establishment of colonial ideologies and policies: the census, the map and the museum. "They profoundly shaped the way the colonial state imagined its dominion - the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its

---

[2]Benedict Anderson, ***Imagined Communities*** (Verso, 1993), 163.

ancestry."[3] Russia and the Soviet Union acted at once as the dynastic state and the colonial state, engaging in Russification, first beginning in 1881 under Alexander III, and, again, under Stalin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and to the present day. And within the imagination of the Russian and Soviet nation of peoples and nations, these polities invented traditions that served to solidify and rationalize its presence in Siberia.

In Medieval and Imperial Russia, counting subjects of the Slavic principalities and the Russian Empire was connected to collection of household or poll taxes. The systematization of census-taking began under Peter the Great from 1718-1722 in order to more efficiently collect taxes to feed government coffers. In 1724 a soul tax was imposed on all male peasants and non-noble urban dwellers to replace household tax and tax on cultivated land, and, furthermore, the state gained "a really efficient mechanism by which it could sweep all the unorganized elements of society into recognized classes."[4] After this census, serfs were not allowed to leave estates without permission from their masters, vastly increasing the power of the landlords who Peter made responsible for collecting the poll tax and for military recruitment.[5]

In the heyday of Peter, indigenous peoples were still being counted as *inozemtsy* rather than the various indigenous clan groups to which they belonged. Much like in European Russia, indigenous peoples were being taxed but in the form of fur tribute, *yasak*. Hence their other nomenclature, *iasachnye liudi*. Fur from Siberia also fed the dynasty's perquisites, affording Peter to engage in offensive wars, to build St. Petersburg and to establish a Naval fleet. Much like oil, gas, diamonds, gold and timber represent today, fur was the major trade commodity bringing in substantial earnings from western Europe. It was

---

3Ibid., 163-164.

4Jerome Blum, ***Lord and Peasant in Russia*** (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 415.

5Ibid.

very important then to determine who were the *yasak* payers, and who were not.

By 1822, under Speransky's reforms, it was still important to determine who the *yasak* people were, but it was also important once again to categorize who the *inozemtsy* were. Speransky's categorization of the Natives into settled, nomads and wanderers served two purposes for the state. First, it authorized the state to determine what kind of tax or tribute certain categories of Natives were to pay, and, at the same time, made it easier for the state to govern them. By placing a significant number of Natives in the settled category, and thus giving settled Natives equal status with peasants, the state attempted to simplify its governing role in the Russian North and Siberia. Another aim of the state was to provide a certain degree of self-governance for the Natives by encouraging tribal administration. Under Speransky's codification of laws, the Natives of Siberia were counted no longer as *inozemtsy* but rather as *inorodtsy*, allowing them to be part of the Russian Empire but still designating them as different from both European Russians and non-Europeans of the Russian Empire. Despite attempts by Speransky's assistant to ascertain the mindset of the Siberian aborigines, judging Natives through the cultural lens of "national" development (relegating them to infancy[6]) and sheer ignorance of how Natives organized and conducted their lives led to problems of poverty and further alienation of the *inorodtsy*.

The Bolsheviks and the ethnographers who went to Siberia in great numbers in the 1920s made the same mistake as Speransky in judging the level of civilization of Siberian Natives vis-a-vis their own European influenced "civilization". The Soviets transformed the indigenous peoples of Siberia from aliens to "small peoples of the north," and along the same lines as they were in the census of 1897, indigenous northerners were counted by their ethnic designation determined by ethnographers and anthropologists. In Northwest

---

6 Anne McClintock has persuasively argued that Victorians also regarded their colonized as being in infancy, who needed a paternal guide to bring them to civilized, mature adulthood. Anne McClintock, ***Imperial Leather: race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial contest*** (New York: Routledge, 1995), 44-45.

Siberia, they were Voguls (Mansi), Ostiaks (Khanty) and Samoyed (Nenets). The conduct of censuses for the Soviets served to enumerate for them the members of a new socialist workers' state, indicating for the Bolshevik leaders how many workers they had for the building of socialism in the Soviet Union. The census also served to enumerate the peoples who Stalin would eventually shape into Soviet citizens as he Russified, and educated the population in soviet politics and culture. Under the Soviets, Speransky's law codes which advocated a level of Native self-government were abolished and the category of *inorodtsy* or alien was eradicated. The regime readied the indigenous populations for their transformation into the new Soviet Man, highly socialized, industrialized and politicized in the dogmas of Marxism-Leninism. Moreover, Speransky's policies also served to map indigenous land use by strongly encouraging them to settle in villages with Russian peasants and discouraging them from the nomadic and wandering lifestyle that they traditionally led. In this regard, the management of the geography of indigenous peoples could be simplified.

Hand in hand with census taking and collection of tribute was exploration and mapping of the land beyond the Urals. Soon after Ermak gained control of Sibir' for Ivan IV in 1581, Siberia was opened to Russian settlers, encouraged by the administration dependent on the riches that Siberia afforded. Because the geography of Siberia is characterized mostly by flat plain and prairie, it was relatively easy for *promyshlie*, explorers and others to map, explore, exploit and settle the territory between West Siberia and Kamchatka in a very short period of time. Siberia was considered by the administration to be their abutting territory, and therefore, the inhabitants whom the Imperial administration mapped and identified in Siberia and the North were called foreigners and the lands they inhabited ready for the taking.

Mapping the territory served several purposes for the various Russian administrations across the centuries, with economic development, defence and sovereignty, and modernization (Sovietization), the most pressing concerns. Economic concerns were and are an ongoing rationalization for colonization of

geographical space with natural, non-renewable resources the most valuable for the regime 500 years ago and today. In terms of defence and security, the new Bolshevik regime was forced to fight a Civil War in European Russia and, at the same time, hold on to Russian territories east of the Urals. Not for the first time, Siberia became a theatre of warfare, stretching the war against the Whites and the Reds across the European and Asian continents. For the Bolsheviks, it was an assertion of power over territories that they considered their inheritance from the fallen Tsarist regime that was conquered at the border between European Russia and West Siberia. For the Soviets, the fashioning of Siberian territory into the flank of the Worker's Paradise only made sense if it could make the inhabitants of Siberia into modern peoples who had transgressed the stages from primitivism and were now ready for the hard road to socialism. For the Soviets, and the Imperial administration before them, "Geographical difference across *space* figured as a historical difference across *time*."[7] Sovietization was the bridge that would connect space and time for the indigenous peoples of Siberia.

Towards the end of the 1920s and into the 1930s, with Stalin's nationalities policies in place, and paying official, if not practical, heed to the various minorities, a cohort of stalwart Native Communist Party members and leaders rose to leadership. Instituting a policy of *korenizatsia* guaranteed the leadership of various regions to titular ethnic and national groups but usually with a Russian as second-in-command. Leaders from non-Russian ethnic and national groups were co-opted into the Soviet system. Physically and practically, this entailed the geographical mapping of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic into various titular national areas, and as in the case of the Canadian north, traditional territories were mapped according to the whims of administrators who had little if any contact with the inhabitants of these various Siberian regions occupied by indigenous peoples. Boundaries between Khanty, Mansi, Nenets, Evenk, Sakha, Even and others were drawn not considering the traditional land use and occupation of these territories. In an extreme case, the

---

7 McClintock, 40. Emphases in original.

Evenk, traditionally a nomadic peoples, occupied three major autonomous regions in the RSFSR and now in the Russian Federation: Russia, Sakha and Buryatia. The ramification of the haphazard mapping that indelibly placed the Evenk in three different territories bode ill for any chance of Native self-government.

Anderson's third criteria for establishing colonial ideologies and policies is the museum. Akin to Anderson's argument is what McClintock suggests of Victorian fetishism towards collecting and exhibiting that shaped the *"musée imaginaire"* of middle class empiricism. Collecting and exhibiting in the sense that McClintock describes certainly precedes the Victorian era in Russia, starting with Peter the Great and his famous Kunstkamera displaying fetuses, two-headed piglets and skulls of "primitive" peoples. Granted, the impulse to collect such curiosities may be relegated to the character of Peter I, but his establishment of the Kunstkamera for public spectacle may be considered "as the modern fetish house of the archaic,"[8] and indeed a deliberate indication from the regime that Russia was on the road to modernity. The museum amassed a huge collection of Native artifacts from as far as Papua New Guinea, Alaska and the Canadian north, and as near as Siberia, displaying the success of explorations by Russians and other hired explorers venturing to far off places. The museum, for the regime, became a signifier of how civilized Russia had become, very like "the exemplary institution for embodying the Victorian narrative of progress" that it had become for Britain in the later half of the 19th century.[9]

For the Soviet regime, the making of indigenous peoples into the *"musée imaginaire"* was in concord with civilizing those who were "museumized." That is, for the regime to place indigenous artifacts and histories on display meant that these indigenous peoples and their traditions had become history and spectacle to be looked at, admired, reviled, criticized, appreciated, studied, and so on. Moreover, by creating this *"musée imaginaire"* what becomes evident is that the

---

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

regime has assumed that it is only in museums, particularly the Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg, attached to the Russian Museum, that indigenous peoples and their living cultures and traditions exist. The regime created what McClintock calls "anachronistic space" wherein indigenous peoples for the Soviet regime were presented as "prehistoric, atavistic, and irrational, inherently out of place in the historical time of modernity."[10] But because under Soviet socialism these prehistoric peoples were part of Soviet territory, they would be brought, without fail, to the historical time of modernity and become full citizens of the worker's state. While bringing indigenous peoples from prehistoric time to modern time proved to be more difficult than the regime planned, by the time Mikhail Gorbachev comes to power in 1985, the numerically small peoples of the North had indeed become modernized through colonization, Sovietization and Russification of Siberia.

In the 1990s, as the dire existence of indigenous peoples in Siberia was becoming known, the Ethnography Museum in St. Petersburg would not be the only museum in Russia to display artifacts, models, and dioramas depicting the numerically small peoples of the north. Almost every city and every town in West Siberia displays Native artifacts as part of the history of the region, to depict how far these "primitive" peoples had advanced with the assistance of Soviet power. The commodification of Native peoples in Siberia would also take the form of shows focusing on traditional costumes and dances, supposedly capturing a lost past and in contrast to industrial, modern development that could only make the lives of all Soviet citizens better. As I have argued in the previous chapter (page 174), the "showing" of indigenous culture and artifacts has become theatre, in the Balinese sense described by Clifford Geertz. The paradox in the post-Soviet period is that indigenous peoples now quite readily and enthusiastically participate in this "museumizing", in creating the grandiose as a simile for indigenous history, traditional culture and the preservation thereof. To do so proves that indigenous peoples still exist, and that their

---

[10]Ibid.

cultures and traditions are as vibrant and valid as those of their colonizers from whom they learned the meaning of museum.

As the colonized learned from their colonizers, the colonized effectively recreated their own identities. Comparable to the African experience described by Terence Ranger,

> The invented traditions imported from Europe not only provided whites with models of command but also offered many Africans models of 'modern' behaviour. The invented traditions of African societies- whether invented by Europeans or by Africans themselves in response -- distorted the past but became in themselves realities through which a good deal of colonial encounter was expressed.[11]

Boyarin argues similarly that the transformation to modernity is not a "unidirectional process" and that the "'natives' in many cases have shown themselves quite capable of reinventing their own identities in ways that are not only compatible with but that take advantage of the new technologies."[12] Indeed, in the Soviet and post-Soviet experiences, the invented traditions that are reality were learned from Soviet propaganda as to who the "small peoples of the North" were and from Russian ethnographers who painstakingly recorded Native history through the panoptical lens of socialist realism. Expressions of identity by the Khanty, Mansi and the Iamalo-Nenets, then, are derived from the definitions of identity promoted and exulted by the state through the three tools of colonization described by Anderson: census, map and museum.

Interestingly Natives co-opted these tools to shape, form and strengthen their identities as "numerically small peoples of the North" claiming for themselves a history that was created for them, first by Imperial Russia and then

---

11 Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in ***The Invention of Tradition***. Eric Hobsbawm, and Terence Ranger, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 212.

12 Boyarin, 15.

the Soviet Union, again by using the same tools used by the colonizers. In 1993, just two years after the breakup of the Union, Mansi were declaring their nationality officially as Mansi, accounting for a small but significant rise in the Mansi population of the village of Leiushi, and the surrounding villages.[13] Population numbers shown by the most recent country-wide census of 1989 emphasized the minority status of Northern peoples. They have become a political rallying tool in the urgency to preserve not just culture, language, tradition and identity, but also existence. Salient in the question of census is land and territory, that has not as yet been addressed by the Yeltsin administration despite the numerous times that it has been brought forth in the Russian Parliament.[14] Arguments, especially from oil and gas developers revolve around the good of the many at the expense of the few--in this case the numerically-small peoples of the North who want to delineate traditional territories that, arguably, they have used for thousands of years.

The mapping and remapping of territories, traditional boundaries, traditional land use and immemorial rights is predictably highly politicized and coincides with the mapping and remapping of memory and identity of Native peoples in Siberia. As territory is delineated according to traditional land use, historical boundaries, and as self-governing territories (*rodovaya obshchina*) are claimed, so too are claims to historical immemorial rights that were not even thought of before. Immemorial rights in Siberia, as they are in Canada, is a controversial point and one that could potentially pit one Native group against another. Such inter-ethnic conflict can be seen in the example of the Sakha

---

13 ZAGs Leiushi, Kondinskoe Raion, Tiumen' Oblast', August 1993, and interview with the Head Administrator of Leiushi who accounted for the change in population as not natural increase but self-declaration as Mansi.

14 State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Committee on Nationalities, "Acts and other legislative standards relating to the political and socio-economic development of the indigenous peoples of Russia (19th - 20th centuries): Self-Government, Land and Natural Resources," (Moscow, 1995), 15-18.

Republic as Russians, Sakha, the Evenk, Even, Yukagir, Chukchee and others vie for political and geographic power over territory and administration.

In the case of the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, the remapping of territories for oil and gas development directly overlaps with Native peoples' traditional land use. So what was previously traditional land is transformed into the reservoir of Russia's major export commodity. This commodification of what Natives believe is their traditional land that is intertwined with their spiritual and existential identity and to which they claim immemorial rights results in the Russian practice that this land may be mapped, divided, subdivided, leased, and exploited. Because Native identity and being is so intertwined with the land that they have traditionally used, it is fair to suggest that Natives themselves have been mapped and remapped, shifted about and moved at the will of the Soviet government and, more recently, the Russian government and oil and gas companies. In the mapping and remapping of Native peoples since oil and gas was first extracted in the early 1960s, indigenous peoples' identities have changed from much more than just the Soviet citizens to which they were transformed in the 1930s: they also became Workers for the socialist state, members of the Peoples' Deputies, urban dwellers, alcoholics, doctors, schoolteachers, *obshchina* directors, and, now, entrepreneurs and, again, shamans.

While it is now possible for the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets to practice their traditions and to study and speak their respective languages freely, these indigenous peoples are acutely aware of the loss of culture, tradition and language that occurred over the 70-year period of Soviet rule and, thus, in an attempt to preserve their culture - indeed to revive it - the Native peoples of the Russian North and Siberia, specifically the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets, have adopted and adapted what they have been taught about their own cultures and traditions by Russian ethnographers, archivists and museum curators. As I have attempted to show in Chapter 5, the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets have engaged in a "showing" of their traditional cultures, art, folklore, language and lifeways. This "showing" resembles the Balinese theatre described by Geertz,

and as their land is commodified by the Russian polity and interests, Khanty, Mansi, and Iamalo-Nenets cultures are commodified by these very same Natives in the belief that by "showing" as in a museum, their culture and tradition may be preserved, even if invented in the first place.

The museumizing of indigenous peoples by indigenous peoples is suggestive of decolonization. But can the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets be regarded as decolonized when much of what they claim is their immemorial rights to their traditional territory is still very much in question? What, then, can we make of this museumizing of themselves, of the commodification of their tradition, and culture? In order to answer this, we go back to Anderson who suggests that the museum served the needs of the colonial state in order to solidify its dominion. For the colonized undergoing the long and onerous task of decolonization, some of the rationale is the same with Natives believing that through the promotion of their culture, tradition and folklore they may somehow shape the imagination of community and promote the "legitimacy of" their "ancestry."[15]

A paradox that existed within both the Russian Imperial state and the Soviet Union remains-- to be put into a museum setting implies the end of the existence of an artifact, that it may be displayed because it is no longer living. For indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia, the importance of museums is not just to remember the past in the telling of a history, it also means a survival of the past in the present with indigenous culture, tradition and language being the true markers of this process of preservation through the *musée imaginaire*.[16]

This is not to suggest that what is invented and imagined is not valid, but rather that, as Anderson and McClintock aver, what is invented and imagined, is

---

[15] Anderson, 163-164.

[16] "Muzei stal svoeobraznoi, popytkoi pereneseniia evropeiskogo po proiskhozhdenniu instituta na sovershenno inuiu kul'turnuiu pochvu, gde on 'mutiroval', kachestvenno izmenilsia i nachal sluzhit' razvitiiu natsional'noi kul'tury." Mikhail Gneddovskii, "Moi dom--moi Kosmos," ***Severnye Prostory*** (no. 3-4, 1996), 19-21.

made real. It is made real through, as Gayatri Spivak and Tuija Pulkkinen[17] suggest: multiplicity, repetition and citation, and moreover, referring to Judith Butler, identity "is not being but doing."[18] By continually "doing",--multiplying, repeating and citing--identity, specifically ethnic and national identity is created. What transpires, in deliberate juxtaposition to the identifications given by the dominant polity to the numerically-small peoples of the north, is that the Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets form political identities to "recover" who they are, possibly reversing the various identities imposed on them by the hegemonic polities that governed them and their territories since 1581. As a result, indigenous peoples of Northwest Siberia now define themselves in the positive opposite of how the Soviets and Russians defined them:[19] no longer *inozemtsy* or *inorodtsy*, but rather indigenous, aboriginal and Native peoples with immemorial rights to land and resources, and certainly, no longer savages and more than just citizens of Russia.[20] Concomitantly, in the last seven years, the Natives of Siberia have categorized themselves as the United Nations defines indigenous peoples, thus suggesting commonality and imagining community with hundreds of colonized indigenous peoples around the world in order to "remember," recapture and preserve their cultures, languages and traditions.

---

17 Gayatri Spivak, "Acting Bits/Identity Talk" in ***Identities***, Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., eds. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 147-180; and Tuija Pulkkinen, "Gender and Nation," unpublished paper given at the 28 June 1998 Plenary Session of the 2nd Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference, Tampere, Finland.

18 Pulkkinen, 3.

19"Political identities are formed in order to dispose of these definitions of themselves as slightly defective norm, or as a lacking universal, and in order to redefine oneself as something altogether different from that supposedly universal, as something positively different." Ibid., 5.

20"We built this museum for ourselves, our children, grandchildren, so that they remember the soul of every thing, know how to relate to them, to know what to do, if necessary." Iuri Vella, quoted in "Moi dom--moi Kosmos," 21. Translation by author.

Archival and Primary Sources

Oral Interviews

In the Summers of 1993 and 1994, I conducted interviews with 43 villagers and representatives of Khanty, Mansi and Iamalo-Nenets representatives. In 1993, 22 interviews were collected in the villages of Leiushi, Listvennichnyi and Shugur in the Kondinskoe Region. In 1994, 19 interviews were gathered in the Tazovskii Region near the sight of the enormous gas developments in Novyi Urengoin and along the Taz River in the village of Tibei Salei and in the town of Tazovski. In the Spring of 1995, I interviewed two Native Khanty representatives of the *rodovoie obshchinas* in in Surgut and in Varyogan.

The interviewees ranged in ages between 27 and 70, with the rationale that this age group are the ones who lived through the most intense resource extraction and development in the region. Of the 43 interviewed, 37 were women.

Government Documents and Articles

Aipin, Eremei . "Not by Oil Alone," and "U.S.S.R.: Road of Discord," *IWGIA Newsletter* no. 1 (July/August 1991), 36-39.

---------. "Idet bezzastenchivyi grabezh." *Severnye Prostory.* no. 37 (January 1991), 3.

----------. "Za 'paradnymi' razgovorami." *Literaturnaia Rossiia* 3, no. 46 (18 November 1988): 3.

Bauer, Henning, Andreas Kappeler, Brigitte Roth, (HRSG.), *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991.

"Dorogaia redaktsia!" Tiumen', Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumen'skoi Oblast'. Fond 814, opis' 1, delo 5920, str. 49

Dmytryshyn, Basil, E.A.P. Crownhart-Vaughan and Thomas Vaughan, trans. and eds. *Russia's Conquest of Siberia, 1558-1700: a documentary record.* Volume One. Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1985.

Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeevich. *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress.* Moscow: Novosti Press, 1986.

----------*Sibiri--uskorennyi shag : vystuplenie na soveshchanii partiino-khoziaistvennogo aktiva Tiumen'skoi i Tomskoi oblastei : 6 sentiabria 1985 g.* Moskva : Izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1985.

Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Rossiiskoi Federatsii po Statistikie. *Chislennost' i Sostav Naseleniia Narodov Severa: po dannym perepisi naseleniia 1989 goda.* Moskva: Respublikanskii informatsionno-izdatel'skii tsentr, 1992.

Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Rossiiskoi Federatsii po statistike, *Demograficheskii Ezhegodnik Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1995.* Moscow, 1995.

Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Rossiiskoi Federatsii po Statistikie. *Demograficheskii Ezhegodnik Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1993.* Moscow, 1994.

Goskomstat R.S.F.S.R. Tiumen'skoe Oblastnoe Upravlenie Statistiki. *Sostav naseleniia narodov severa po itogam vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia.* Tiumen', 1989.

Goskomstat Rossiiskoy Federatsii Tiumen'skoe Oblastnoe Upravlenie Statistiki. *Chislennost' naseleniia Tiumen'skoi Oblasti, 1989-1993 g.g.* Statisticheskii sbornik. Tiumen, 1993g.

Goskomstat Rossiiskoi Federatsii Tiumen'skoe Oblastnoe Upravlenie Statistiki. "Raspredelenie Naseleniia Tiumen'skoi Oblasti po polu i vozrastu, 1988-1992 g.g." Statisticheskii sbornik. Tiumen, 1993g.

Gosudarstvennyi Komitet RSFSR *Tiumen'skoe Oblastonoe Upravlenie Statistiki, Sostav Naseleniia Narodov Naselenie Narodov Severa po Itogam Vsesoiuznoi Perepisi Naselenie 1989.* Tiumen', 1989.

Iamal-Potomkam, *Ustav: Assotsiatsii korennykh narodov Severa Iamalo-Nenetskii avtonomnogo okruga (respubliki) "Iamal-Potomkam!"* Salekhard, 31 January 1991.

Ispolnitel'noi Komitet. "Resheniie [Resolution]. No. 127." g. Salekhard. 20 September 1989g.

Ispolnitel'noi Komitet. [Memo] No. 243. p. Tarkie-Salie raiispolkom 23 May 1989 g.

Khariuchi, Sergei. "My luchshie znaem, kak nam zhit.'" *Iamalskii Meridian,* no. 1 (September 1992), 6-7.

Karlov, V. and S. Simonova. "PROTOKOL geologo-tekhnicheskogo soveshaniia Iamalo-Nenetskogo geologo-razvedochnogo tresta na neft' i gaz." Salekhard, 21 November 1964.

Komissia ispolkoma oblastnovo Sovieta narodnikh deputatov. "O rabote organov zdravookhraneniia avtonomnykh okrugov v mestakh prozhivaniia narodnostei Severa po vipolneniu postanovlenia Sovieta Ministrov RSFSR ot 4 aprelia 1979 g. No. 181 'O dopolnitel'nykh merakh po snizheniu zabolevaemosti naseleniia tuberkulezom v RSFSR' i sootvetstvuiushchevo reshenia oblispolkoma of 16.07.1979. 14 October 1983. Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumen'skoi Oblast'. Fond 814, opis' 1, delo 6788, str. 10.

Lenin, V.I. *Collected Works*. Volume 22. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964.

Lesotskie, S. S. "Spravka: o sotsial'no kul'turnom razvitii Iamalo-Nenetskogo natsional'nogo okruga Tiumen'skoi oblasti za godi Sovetskoi vlasti." Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumen'skoi Oblasti, Fond 814, Opis 1, Delo 5911 (1977), 58-60.

Medikin, S.P. "Dorogaia redaktsia" (A letter to the Khanty-Mansiisk regional executive committee and Party), Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv, Tiumenskoi Oblasti, Fond 814, Opis' 1, Delo 5920, 1979, List 49-52.

"Meropriatia: po vipolneniu Postanovlenia otveta Ministrov RSFSR ot 20 maia 1980 gode No. 280 'O merakh po dal'neishemu ekonomicheskomu i sotsial'nomu razvitiu raionovprozhivania narodnostei Severe." Tiumen', Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumenskoi Oblast'. Fond 814, opis' 1, delo 7103, str. 63.

Mikhailov, A.E. Predsedateliu Tiumen'skogo oblispolkoma "O khode vypolneniia Postanovleniia Soveta Ministrov RSFSR ot 16 Sentiabria 1964 goda No. 1166 'O merakh po okazaniiu pomoshchi v osvoenii neftianykh mestorozhdenii v Tiumen'skoi Oblasti'," Gosudarstvenii Arkhiv Tiumen'skoi Oblasti, Fond 814, Opis' 1, Delo 4241, 20-29

Ministerstvo Geologii SSSR. "Khanty-Mansiiskoe Proizvodstvennoe Geologicheskoe Ob'edinenie po Geofizicheskim Rabotam 'Khantymansiiskgeofizika'" [Memo to N.A. Chernukhinu] 06 February 1989.

Ministerstvo Lesnovo khoziaistvo. "Spravka: K plenumu Tiumen'skovo obkoma KPSS." No. 03-6. Tiumen', 05 September 1989.

"O narushenii pripodookhrannovo zakonodatel'stva." Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumen'skoi Oblast'. Fond 814, Opis' 1, delo 6209.

Oblispolkom Otdel po narodnostiam Severa. "O merakh po sovershenstvovaniu i dal'neshemu rasvireniu prirodovania iazikov narodov Severa." Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumen'skoi Oblast'. Fond 814, opis' 1, gelo 5920.

Oblispolkom Otdel Severa. "O statuse territorii prioritetnovo prirodopol'zovania." No. 2/394. Tiumen, 23 March 1990.

"Osobo tsennie (unikal'nie) zoni okhotpromislobovo znachenia." Prilozhenie No. 3 k resheniu uvatskovo raiispolkoma ot 08.02.90, g. No. 17. Tiumen' Oblast'.

Ot korennykh zhitelei, khantov i nentsev, rybakov-okhotnikov, detei byvshykh olenevodov poselka Variogan, Tiumen'skoi oblasti, Khanty-Mansiiskogo okruga, Nizhnevartovskogo raiona, "Obrashchenie," (An appeal sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party regarding interethnic relations.), 5 April 1989, 1-10.

Postanovlenie: prezidiuma TsK profsoiuz rabochikh geologorazvedochnykh rabot, "Protokol No. 25: Ob initsiative kollektivov burovyk brigad Tiumen'skogo upravleniia t.t. Urusova S.N. i Tarasova, A. F." Moskva, 19 marta 1963g.

Prilozhenie No. 1 k postanovleniu Ts.K. KPSS i Sovieta Ministrov SSSR ot iulia 1956g. "Meropriatiia: po dalneishemu razvitiu khoziaistvo i kul'turi v raionakh Krainevo Severa i otdalennikh mestnostiakh, Pripavnennikh k nim." Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumen'skoi Oblast'. Fond 814, opis' 1, delo 4113.

"Programma Assotsiatsii 'Spasenie Iugri.'" *Leninskaia Pravda* 20 July 1989, 6.

Prokopchuk, B.B. "Otvet narodnomu deputatu SSSR tov. Aininu, I.T. na evo vopros v Sovet Ministrov RSFSR dan 11.02.91." 11 February 1991.

Radischev, A.N. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii.* Moscow and Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1959.

Raishev, Gennady. *Khanty Legendy/Khanty Legends.* Sverdlovsk, 1991.

Sangi, Vladimir. "Vernut' prava khoziaevam zemli." *Izvestiia*, 12 July 1990.

Shelakhin, P., Predsedatel' TsK Profsoiusa, "Ob initsiativie kollektivov burovykh brigad Tiumen'skogo geologicheskogo upravleniia t.t. Urusova, S.N. i Tarasova, A.F." *POSTANOVLENIE prezidiuma TsK profsoiuza rabochikh geologorazvedochnykh rabot.* Protokol No. 25, 19 March 1963, Moscow.

Shestalov, Iuvan. "Khanty. Mansi. Kto my?" *Sterkh: etnos, religiia, kul'tura,* no. 1 (1993): 4-5.

"Spravka: o khode kapital'novo stroitel'stva u kapital'novo remonta zhil'ia i ob'ektov sotskul't-bita mestnimi Sovetami i ob'edineniem 'Sibribprom' v Khanty-Mansiiskom i Iamalo-Nenetskom avtonomnikh okrugakh za 9 mesiatsev 1981 g." Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumenskoi Oblasti. Fond 814, opis' 1, delo 5913, 116.

"Spravka: o rabote organov zdravookhraneniia avtonomnikh okrugov v mestakh prozhivania narodostei Severa po vipolneniiu postanovlenia Sovieta Ministrov RSFSR ot 4 aprelia 1979 goda No. 181 'O dopolnitel'nikh merakh po snizheniiu zabolevaemosti naseleniia tuberkulezom v RSFSR' i sootvetstvuiushchevo reshenia oblispolkoma of 16.07.1979. 14 October 1983. Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Tiumen'skoi Oblast'. Fond 814, opis' 1, delo 6788, 13.

Spravka: o razvitii economiki i kul'tury Khanty-Mansiiskogo natsional'nogo okruga Tiumen'skoi Oblasti." Gosudarstvennyii Arkhiv Tiumenskoi Oblasti, Fond 814, Opis 1, Delo 5911, (1977), 61-71.

Shelakhin, P. Predsedatel' TsK Profsoiusa, "Ob initsiativie [sic] kollektivov burovykh brigad Tiumen'skogo geologicheskogo upravleniia t.t. Urusova, S.N. i Tarasova, A.F." *POSTANOVLENIE prezidiuma TsK profsoiuza rabochikh geologorazvedochnykh rabot,* Protokol No. 25, 19 March 1963, Moscow.

Shestalov, Iuvan. "Khanty. Mansi. Kto my?" *Sterkh: etnos, religia, kultura,* no. 1 (1993): 4-5.

Shinkarev, L. "Land should regain its genuine owners." An interview with Vladimir Sangi, President of the Association of Northern Peoples. *Izvestia* (12 July 1990).

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Committee of Nationalities, "Acts and other legislative standards relating to the political and socio-economic development of the indigenous peoples of Russia, (19th -20th centuries): self-government, land and natural resources," Report to the International Conference to Assist Russian Federal Programmes Supporting Aboriginal Peoples of the Russian North. Moscow, 1995.

Tiumen' agrolesprom. [Letter to the Head of the oblast' Soviet people's deputies, Prokopchuku, V.V. and the Head of the Khanty-Mansiisk regional Soviet peoples' deputies, Filipenko, A.B.] No. 92. Tiumen, 25 January 1990.

Tiumen'skii Oblastnoi Soviet Narodnikh Deputatov. Reshenie [Resolution]. "O territoriakh priopitetnovo pripodopol'zovania." Tiumen', 31 January 1991.

Yeltsin, Boris. "Ukaz presidenta RFSFR o razvitii Tiumen'skoi Oblasti." *Severnye Prostory*, no. 43 (July 1991): 5.

Bibliography

Afanas'ev, Iu. "Sinsko-Boikarskaia Etnicheskaia Territoriia, Shuryshkarskogo Raiona s osobym rezhimom prirodopol'zovaniia." *Severnye Prostory*, no. 13 (14 January 1994): 1-9.

Aganbegian, Abel Gezevich. *Zapadnaia Sirbir' na rubezhe vekov* Sverdlovsk : Sredne-Ural'skoe knizhnoe izd-vo, 1984.

Aleksandrov, V.A. The beginnings of the Irbit Fair. *Soviet Geography* 31, no. 3 (March 1990): 202-222.

Al'kor, Ia. "Zadachi kul'turnogo stroitel'stvo na Krainem Severe." *Sovetskii Sever*, no. 2 (1934): 22-35.

"Amoco and Nadymgazprom have presented in Salekhard the development feasibility study covering three fields on Iamal Peninsula." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 91, no. 45, (8 November 1993): 2.

"Amoco has signed an agreement with Russia's Gazprom to conduct a feasibility study of potential reserves on the Iamal Peninsula." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 90, no. 35 (August 31 1992): 4.

"Amoco is among winners of rights to develop reserves in the Khanty-Mansiisk area of western Siberia." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 91, no. 39 (27 September 1993): 4.

"An Environmental Disaster?" *Pravda* (31 May 1991): 4. Translated in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 43, no. 22 (1991): 26.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition. London and New York: Verso, 1993.

Andreev, V. "Osvoenie kormovoi bazy Iamalskogo olenevodstvo." *Sovetskii Sever*, no. 3 (1934): 63-67.

Andrianov, B.V. and L.F. Monogarova. "Leninskoe Uchenie ob Obshchestvenno-ekonomicheskikh ukladakh i ego znachenie dlia etnografii." *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 1 (1970): 35-46.

Antropova, V.V. "Uchastie etnografov v prakticheskom osushchestvlenii Leninskoi natisional'noi politiki na Krainem Severe (1920-1930gg.)" *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 6 (1972): 19-27.

Apollova, Natal'ia Gennadievna. *Khoziaistvennoe osvoenie Priirtyshia v kontse XVI-pervoipolovine XIX v.* Moscow: Nauka, 1976.

Arifdzhanov, Rustam. "No bright prospect of Iamal gas for us yet (Iamal Peninsula gas fields, Russia)." *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* Feb 23 1994, v46, n4, p22(1).

Armstrong, Terence. "The Administration of Northern Peoples: The USSR." In R. St. J. Macdonald, ed. *The Arctic Frontier*. Toronto: Universtiy of Toronto Press, 1966.

Babaieva, Svetlana. "Tiumen gas: a fountain of discontent (gas workers on strike at Nadym, Siberia's gas capital)." *Moscow News* no. 49, (Dec 3 1993): 3.

Bahri, Deepika. "What is Postcolonialism?" *ARIEL* 26, no. 1 (January 1995): 51-82.

Bakhrushin, S.V. "Ostiatskie I vogul'skie kniazhestvo v XVI I XVII vv." In *Nauchnie Trudy*. Moscow, 1965.

Balzer, Marjorie. "Ethnicity without power: the Siberian Khanty in Soviet Society." *Slavic Review* 42, no. 4, (1983): 633-48.

---------- "The Route to Eternity: Cultural Persistence and Change in Siberian Khanty Burial Ritual." *Arctic Anthropology* XVII, no. 1 (1980): 77 - 89.

----------"Rituals of Gender Identity: Markers of Siberian Khanty Ethnicity, Status, and Belief." *American Anthropologist* 83 (1981): 850-67.

----------Strategies of Ethnic Survival: Interaction of Russians and Khanty (Ostiak) in Twentieth Century Siberia. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1980.

Bartels, Alice and Dennis. "Cultural relativism, Marxism, and Soviet policy toward the Khanty." *Culture - Canadian Ethnology Society*, 3, no. 2 (1983): 25-30.

----------."Are Siberian native people part of a 'Fourth World'?" *Dialectical anthropology* (Amsterdam) 12, no. 2 (1987): 245-252.

Barth, Frederik. *Ethnic Group and Boundaries*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969.

Bassin, Mark. "Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century." *American Historical Review* 96, no. 3 (June 1991): 763-794.

----------. "Expansion and Colonialism on the Eastern Frontier: Views of Siberia and the Far East in Pre-Pretrine Russia." *Journal of Historical Geography* 14 (January 1988): 3-21.

Bauer, Henning, Andreas Kappeler, and Brigitte Roth, (HRSG.), *Die Nationalittäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991.

Bazanov, A. G. *Ocherki po istorii missionerskikh shkol na Krainem Severe.* Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Instituta narodov Severa, 1936.

Bazanov, ----- "Vogul'skie [Mansi] deti." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia,* no. 3, (1934): 93-96.

Bazarkina, R. S., Z.T. Komarevtseva, A.P. Panteleev *Molodezh' v sotsialisticheskom stroitel'stve v Zapadnoi Sibiri 1926-1937 gg.* Novosibirsk : Izd-vo "Nauka," Sibirskoe otd-nie, 1986.

Belorusov, Dimitrii Vasil'evich, I. I. Panfilov, V. A. Sennikov. *Problemy razvitiia i razmeshcheniia proizvoditel'nykh sil. Zapadnoi Sibiri.* Moscow: Mysl', 1976.

Bergavinov, S. A. "Partiinie organizatsii Krainego Severa." *Sovetskaia Arktika,* no. 12 (1936): 54-62.

Blum, Jerome. *Lord and Peasant in Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Bobrick, Benson. *East of the Sun.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992.

Bond, Andrew R.; Bassin, Mark; Bradshaw, Michael J.; Demko, George J.; Dienes, Leslie; Goble, Paul; Hausladen, Gary; Liebowitz, Ronald D.; Pryde, Philip R.; Schwartz, Lee; Winston, Victor H. "Panel on Siberia: economic and territorial issues." *Soviet Geography* 32, no. 6 (June 1991): 363-432.

Boutourlin, S.A. "Perspektivy khozaistvennogo ustroeniia Severa." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia,* no. 3 (1926): 5-27.

Bradshaw, Michael J. *Siberia at a time of change: new vistas for Western investment.* London; New York, NY, USA: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1992.

----------"Siberia Poses a Challenge to Russian Federalism." *RFE/RL Research Report* no. 41 (16 October 1992).

Bremmer, Ian and Ray Taras, eds. *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Brodnev, M.M. "Ot rodovogo stoia k sotsializmu." *Sovetskaia Etnografiia,* no. 4 (1950): 92-106.

Bromlei, Iulian V. *Etnosotsial'nie protsessy: teoriia, istoriia, sovremennost'*. Moscow: Izd-vo "Nauka", 1987.

---------. *Etnos i etnografiia*. Moscow: "Nauka," 1973.

Bromlei, Iu. and V.I. Kozlov. "Leninizm i osnovnie tendentsii etnicheskikh protsessov v SSSR." *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 1 (1970): 3-14.

Campbell, Robert W. *The economics of Soviet oil and gas*. Baltimore: Published for Resources for the Future by the Johns Hopkins Press, 1968.

Chance, Norman A. and Elena N. Andreeva. "Sustainability, Equity and Natural Resource Development in Northwest Siberia and Arctic Alaska." *Human Ecology* 23, no. 2 (1995): 217-240.

Chichlo, Boris (direction). *Siberie: questions siberiennes / ouvrage publie sous la*. Paris : Institut d'etudes slaves, 1985.

Chung, Han-ku. *Interest Representation in Soviet Policy-Making: A Case Study of a West Siberian Energy Coalition*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

"Cleaning up spills in Siberian oil fields." *Environment* 32, no. 2, (March 1990): 23.

Conolly, Violet. *Siberia today and tomorrow: a study of economic resources, problems, and achievement* New York : Taplinger Pub. Co., 1976.

Cruikshank, Julie. *The social life of stories: narrative and knowledge in the Yukon Territory*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998.

--------. *Life Lived Like a Story*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990.

--------. *Reading voices = Dän dhá ts'edenintth'é : oral and written interpretations of the Yukon's past*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1991.

--------. *The stolen women : female journeys in Tagish and Tutchone*. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1983.

Daniels, Robert V. *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia: From Lenin to Gorbachev*. Hanover and London: The University Press of New England, 1993.

Davis, Christopher M. "The former Soviet Union." *RFE-RL Research Report* 2, no. 40 (8 Oct. 1993): 35-43.

DeBardeleben, Joan. *Soviet Politics in Transition*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1992.

---------. *The Environment and Marxism-Leninism.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1985.

Debets, G. F. "O novykh klassifikatsiak ras Severnoi Azii." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia,* no. 3-4 (1930): 213-218.

DeLay, Jennifer. "Nemtsov Faces Huge Task as New Russian Energy Head." *Pipeline News* no. 56 (20-26 April 1997).

Dellenbrant, Jan Ake. *The Soviet Regional Dilemma.* Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1986.

Denber, Rachel, ed. *The Soviet Nationality Reader.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992.

Dienes, Leslie. "Prospects for Russian Oil in the 1990s: Reserves and Costs." *Post-Soviet Geography* 34 no. 2 (1993): 79-119.

---------. "Siberia: perestroika and economic development." *Soviet Geography* 32 (n7, September 1991): p445-57.

---------. *Soviet Asia: economic development and national policy choices.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

Dienes, Leslie and Theodore Shabad, *The Soviet Energy System: Resource Use and Policies.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979.

Diment, Galya and Iuri Slezkine, eds. *Between Heaven and Hell: the Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Dolgikh, B.O. "Obrazovanie sovremennykh narodnostei severa SSSR." *Sovetskaia Etnografiia* no. 3 (1967): 3-15.

Dunn, Stephen P, Anatolii M. Khazanov, M.V. Kriukov and Iuri Slezkine in "Comments." [on Valery A. Tishkov's "The Crisis of Soviet Ethnography,"] *Current Anthropology,* vol. 33, no.4 (August - October 1992): 371-394.

Eagleton, Terry, Frederic Jameson and Edward Said. *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.

Ebel, Robert E. *Energy Choices in Russia.* Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994.

El'pik, A. "O kollektivizatsii." *Taiga i Tundra,* no. 2 (1930):38-40.

Erlanger, Steven. "For Yeltsin, Siberia's heart is cold. " *The New York Times* Oct 30 1993, 4.

Fedorov, M.M. *Pravovoe polozhenie narodov Vostochnoi Sibiri, XVII-nachalo XIX v.* Iakutsk: Iakutskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1979.

Feshbach, Murray and Alfred Friendly Jr. *Ecocide in the USSR.* New York: Basic Books, 1992.

"Finland's Neste and Russia's Transneft will conduct a detailed feasibility study of a proposed $1.3 billion pipeline to transport crude oil from Russia's western Siberia, Volga-Urals, and Timan-Pechora oil fields to refineries near St. Petersburg and Helsinki." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 93, no. 11 (March 13 1995): 2.

"First arctic LNG project eyed for W. Siberia's Iamal Peninsula (liquefied natural gas)." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 91, no. 39 (Sept. 27 1993): 36-37.

Fisher, Raymond H. *The Russian Fur Trade, 1550-1700.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1943.

Fisher, Robin and Ken Coates, eds. *Out of the Background.* Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988.

Florinsky, Michael T. *Russia: A History and an Interpretation* Volume I. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955.

Fomin, A. "Sovremennoe sostoianie torgovli Urala, Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia* nos. 5-6 (1926): 64-91.

Fondahl, Gail. "Siberia: assimilation and its discontents." In Bremmer, Ian and Ray Taras, eds. *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

--------. "The Status of Indigenous Peoples in the Russian North." *Post-Soviet Geography* 36, no. 4 (April 1995): 215-224.

-------. "Siberia: Native peoples and newcomers in collision." In Bremmer, Ian and Ray Taras, eds. *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Forsyth, James. *A History of the Peoples of Siberia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

----------. "The Indigenous Peoples in the Twentieth Century." In *The Development of Siberia: People and Resources* eds. Alan Wood and R.A. French. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

Gartsman, M.B. "Smotr bolshikh dostizhenii." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 5-6 (1930): 309-317

"Gazprom Head says Russian gas giant ready to oppose pressure." *Interfax* 18 April 1997. Translated in *Pipeline News* no. 57, Part II (26 April-2 May 1997).

Geertz, Clifford. *Negara: the theatre state in nineteenth-century Bali.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980.

Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983.

---------- ed.*Soviet and Western Anthropology.* London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd, 1980.

----------. "The Soviet and the Savage," with Comments. *Current Anthropology* 16, no. 4 (December 1975): 595-617.

Gibson, James. *Feeding the Russian Fur Trade: Provisionment of the Okhostk Seaboard and the Kamchatka Peninsula 1639-1856.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.

Gleason, Gregory. *Federalism and Nationalism: The Struggle for Republican Rights in the USSR.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990.

Goldman, Marshall I. *The Enigma of Soviet Petroleum: Half-Full or Half-Empty?* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980.

--------.*The Spoils of Progress.* Cambridge: MIT press, 1972.

Golovnev, Andrei V. "Indigenous Leadership in Northwestern Siberia: Traditional Patterns and Their Contemporary Manisfestations." *Arctic Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (1997): 149-166.

Grant, Bruce. *In the Soviet house of culture: a century of perestroikas.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

----------. "Siberia Hot and Cold: Reconstructing the Image of Siberian Indigenous Peoples." In *Between Heaven and Hell: the Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture,* Galya Diment and Iuri Slezkine, eds. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Gurvich, I.S. "Osyshchestvlenniie Leninskoi natsional'noi politiki u narodov krainevo severa SSSR." *Sovetskaia Etnografiia,* no. 1 (1970): 15 -34.

Gurvich, I.S., ed. *Etnicheskoe razvitie narodnostei Severa v sovetskii period.* Moscow: Nauka, 1987.

Gustafson, Thane. *Crisis Amid Plenty: The politics of Soviet energy under Brezhnev and Gorbachev.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

--------. *The Soviet Gas Campaign: politics and policy in Soviet decisionmaking.* Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1983.

Hanbury-Tenison, Robin. "Reindeer nations of Siberia." *Geographical Magazine* 65, n2 (Feb 1993), p15-19.

Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 575-599.

Hewett, Ed A. *Energy, Economics, and Foreign Policy in the Soviet Union.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1984.

Hobsbawm, E.J. *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Hughes, James. "Regionalism in Russia: the rise and fall of Siberian Agreement." *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 7 (1994): 1133-1161.

--------. "Yeltsin's Siberian opposition (Russian President Boris Yeltsin)." *RFE-RL Research Report* 2, no. 50 (Dec 17 1993): 29-34.

--------. *Stalin, Siberia, and the crisis of the New Economic Policy.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

--------."The Irkutsk affair: Stalin, Siberian politics and the end." *Soviet Studies* 41, n2 (April 1989): 228-53.

Iadrintsev, N.M. *Sibir kak Koloniia.* St. Petersburg, 1882.

"Indigenous Peoples of the Soviet North." *IWGIA* Document 67, Copenhagen, July 1990.

Ivanova,V.S.*Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie posledstviia elektrifikatsii zheleznodorozhnogo transporta Zapadnoi Sibiri.* Novosibirsk : Izd-vo "Nauka", Sibirskoe otd-nie, 1980.

Izvestia Sibirskogo otdeleniia Akademii nauk SSSR. *Seriia Region--ekonomika i sotsiologiia.* Novosibirsk: "Nauka," Sibirskoe otd-nie, 1990-1992.

Izvestia SORAN. *Region--ekonomika i sotsiologiia.* Novosibirsk : "Nauka," Sibirskoe otd-nie, 1992.

Kantor, Ie. "Problema osedaniia malykh narodov Severa." *Sovetskiy Sever,* no. 3-4 (1934): 3-9.

Karger, N.K. "Ocherednie etnografii na Severe." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia* nos. 3-4 (1931).

Kennan, George. *Siberia and the Exile System.* New York, 1891.

"Khanty-Mansiisk fields, blocks up for licensing. (oil fields in Western Siberia)" *The Oil and Gas Journal* 92, no. 45 (Nov 7 1994): 96.

"Khanty-Mansiysk National Area. (offers exploration and development rights in Ob River oil and gas fields)" *The Oil and Gas Journal* 90, no. 48 (Nov 30 1992):37.

Khersonskii, A. "Mertvaia voda velikoi reki." *Severnye Prostory*, no. 42 (June 1991): 10-11.

Khomich, L.V. *Nentsy.* Moscow; Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka", 1966.

"Khronika." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia, no.* 2 (1926):96-101.

Kirby, Stuart. *Siberia and the Soviet Far East : resources for the future.* London; New York, N.Y.: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1984.

Kirkow, Peter. "Regional politics and market reform in Russia: the case of the Altai." *Europe-Asia Studies*46, no. 6 (Nov 1994): 1163-1188.

Koenker, Diane and William G. Rosenberg. *Strikes and Revolution in Russia, 1917.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Kolesnikov, A.D., ed. *Voprosy formirovaniia russkogo naseleniia Sibiri v XVII-nachale XIX vv.* Tomsk: Izd-vo Tom. un-ta, 1978.

Kolesnikov, M.A. *Narodnosti Severa: Problemy i Perspektivy ekonomicheskogo i sotsial'nogo razvitiia.* Novosibirsk, 1983.

"Kolkhoz 'Krasnaia zvezda'." *Sovetskii Sever* no. 1 (1933): 105-108.

Kopytoff, Igor.*The Samoyed.* Subcontractor's Monograph. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, Inc, 1955.

Koropeckyj, I. S. and Gertrude E. Schroeder, eds. *The Economics of Soviet Regions* (New York: Praeger, 1981.

Koptiug, V. A. *Siberia is the most dynamically developing region of the country.* Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Pub. House, 1987.

Koshelev, Ia. "V Iamal'skikh Tundrakh." *Sovetskii Sever* no. 5 (1934): 86-91.

Krasil'nikov, M.P. "Piatletka i rabochie kadryi Sovetskoi Azii." *Sovetskaia Aziia*, no. 1-2 (1931): 227-261.

----------. "Naseleniie Urala i Severnoi Azii." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 3 (1929):55-82.

Krupnik, Igor. *Arctic Adaptations: Native Whalers and Reindeer Herders in Northern Eurasia*. Hanover, New Hampshire and London: Darthmouth College, 1993.

Krzhizhanovskii, G.M. "Osnovnie problemy Sibiri." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 1-2 (1930):5-26.

Kulemzin, V.M. and N.V. Lukina. *Znakom'tes': Khanty*. Novosibirsk: Russian Academy of Sciences, 1992.

---------- *Chelovek i Priroda: V Verovaniak Khantov*. Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskovo Universiteta, 1984.

Kushner (Knyshev), P.I. "Uchenie Stalina o Natsii i Natsional'noi Kul'ture i ego znachenie dlia etnografii." *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 4 (1949): 4-19.

L'vov, A.K. "Kul'turnye bazy na Severe." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 3 (1926): 28-37.

Lagunov, K. *Miracle of the Age*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982.

Lantzeff, G.V. *Siberia in the Seventeenth Century: A Study of the Colonial Administration*. Berkely: University of California Press, 1943.

Lapidus, Gail and Victor Zaslavsky with Philip Goldman, eds. *From Union to Commonmealth: Nationalism and Separatism in the Soviet Republics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Larsen, Inge. "A "Northern Parliament"?: Arctic and sub-arctic peoples deputies meet in Moscow, May 1991." *IWGIA Newsletter* 1 (January/February/March 1992): 56-58.

Lavsky, Valery. "Russian regions use the threat of self-isolation." *Moscow News* no. 41 (8 October 1993): 8.

Lebedev, L.V. "Sibirskaia Sverkhmagistral'." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 4 (1929): 25-30.

Legal Status of Indigenous Peoples of Circumpolar States: materials to the Conference 26-28 February 1998. Moscow: People's Friendship University of Russia, 1997.

Levin, M.G. and L.P. Potapov, eds., *The Peoples of Siberia*. English Translation edited by Stephen Dunn. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Light, Margot. "Perestroika isn't working; the miners' strike in Siberia shows that Gorbachev's reform programme is failing to deliver the goods." *New Statesman & Society* 2, no. 60 (July 28 1989), 16-17.

Lincoln, Bruce. *Conquest of a Continent*. New York: Random House, 1994.

Lisov, V. A. *Bogatie i bednye v sibirskoi derevne*. Novosibirsk : RAN , 1992.

Lukina, N.V. *Formirovanie Material'noi Kultury Khantov (Vostochnaia Gruppa)*. Tomsk: Izdatelstvo Tomskovo Universiteta, 1985.

Lunacharskii, A.V. "Zadachi Narkomprosa na Krainem Severe." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia*, no. 3 (1927): 18-22.

Mack, Toni. "The Last Frontier." *Forbes* 149, no. 10 (11 May 1992): 54-55.

MacKenzie, David and Michael Curran, *A History of Russia, the Soviet Union and Beyond*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1993.

Marples, David. *Chernobyl and Nuclear Power in the USSR*. London: The Macmillan Press, 1987.

Martin, Janet. *Treasure of the Land of Darkness The Fur Trade & Its Significance for Medieval Russia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

-------. "Muscovy's Northeast Expansion." *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Sovietique* 24, no. 4 (1983): 459-70.

Maslov, Petr. "Perspektivy narodnogo khoziaistvo Sibiri." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia*, no. 1 (1927): 42-52.

McDaniel, Tim. *The Agony of the Russian idea*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Michael, Henry N., ed. *Studies in Siberian ethnogenesis*. Toronto: Published for the Arctic Institute of North America by University of Toronto Press, 1962.

Mihalisko, Kathleen. "North American-style Native reservation in the Soviet North?" *Report on the USSR* no. 29 (1989):31-34.

----------"SOS for Native Peoples of the Soviet North." *Report on the USSR* 03 February 1989): 3-6.

----------"Discontent in Taiga and Tudra." *Radio Liberty Research* 296/88 (07 July 1988): 1-8.

Milovsky, Alexander. "Hail to thee, papa bear. (the Khanty-Mansi bear festival in northwest Siberia)" *Natural History*102, no. 12 (December 1993):34-42.

Mirotvortsev, K. "K voprosu o prirostie severnykh tuzemnykh plemen." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 2 (1926): 81-85.

"More tracts open in former U.S.S.R (petroleum exploration)." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 91, no. 13(29 March 1993):28-31.

Moskovskii, Aleksei Stepanovich. *Rabochii klass Zapadnoi Sibiri v gody pervoi piatiletki.* Novosibirsk : Redaktsionno-izdatel'skii otdel Sibirskogo otd-niia AN SSSR, 1964.

Muller, J.B. *Leben und Gewohnheiten der Ostiaken*. Berlin, 1720.

Narzikulov, Rustam. "Polish bridgehead (Iamal-Frankfurt gas pipeline)." *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 45, no. 34 (22 September 1993):21.

Narodnoe Khoziaistvo. Moscow, 1960, 1965.

"Nasha Tribuna: Po povodu nabliudenii V.A. Varsonof'evoi nad vogulami." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 4 (1929): 104-126.

"Native Northern Peoples Eye Their Rights." *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 42, no 29 (1990): 20-21.

Nesterov, V.A. "The Petroleum Industry and the Future of Russia." *The Newsletter of the Canadian Institute of Resources Law,* no. 51 (Summer 1995): 1-6.

North, Andrew. "Guardians of the Far North. (communism almost destroyed indigenous peoples of Russia)" *Geographical Magazine* 66, no. 4 (April 1994): 28-32.

Nove, Alec. *An Economic History of the USSR*. London: Penguin Books, 1989.

------. *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.* Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1969.

Novitskiy. V.M. " Tuzemtsy Tobol'skogo Severa i ocherednye voprosy po ustroeniiu ikh zhizni." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia* nos. 5-6 (1928):68-83.

Nulty, Peter. "The Black Gold Rush in Russia." *Fortune* (15 June 1992): 126-130.

Oborotova, E.A. "Narody severa v sovremennom mire. Vzgliady i pozitsii." *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 5, (1988): 146-51.

"Obraztsobie natsional'nye shkoly v severnykh nats. okrugakh i raionakh: Meropriatia po kul'tstroitel'stvu na Severe." *Sovetskii Sever* no.1 (1933): 84-131.

"Obzor sotsialisticheskogo stroitel'stvo na XVI s"ezde VKP(b)." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 5-6 (1930): 295-303.

Ogniov, Igor. "Tiumen's Surprise for Russia," *Izvestia*, 9 January 1992, 2. Translated in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 44, no. 1 (1992): 25-26.

"Oil and the nomads (Siberia, Russia)." *World Press Review* 41, no. 3, March 1994): 43.

Orlov, Boris Pavlovich. *Sibir': shagi industrii*. Moscow: "Sov. Rossiia", 1988.

Osvoenie bez otchuzhdeniia, Materialy ekspertnova oprosa. Tiumen, 1989.

Pasternak, Iaroslav. *Vazhlyvi problemy etnogenezy ukrains'kogo narodu v svitli arkheologichnykh doslidzhen'* (New York: Ukrains'ke istoriichne tovarishchestvo, 1971.

Peterson, D.J. *Troubled Lands*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1993.

Petronenko, Oksana. "A Soviet Reservation? Yes!" *IWGIA Newsletter* no. 1 (July/August 1991): 40-41.

Petrov, A. I. "Perepis' gorodskogo naseleniia Sibiri." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 3 (1927): 37-42.

Pika, A.I. and B.B. Prokhorova. *Neotraditsionalizm na Rossiskom Severe*. Moscow: Institut narodnokhoziaistvennogo prognozirovaniia Tsentr demografii i ekologii cheloveka Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk Mezhdunarodnaia rabochaia gruppa po delam korennogo naseleniia (IWGIA),1994.

Pika, A. and B Prokhorov, "Bol'shie problemy malykh narodov [The big problems of small peoples]." *Kommunist* 16 (1988):16-83. Translated in *IWGIA (International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs) Newsletter* 57 (1989): 123-135.

Pipes, Richard. *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Poelzer, Greg. "Devolution, Constitutional Development and the Russian North." *Post-Soviet Geography* Vol. XXXVI, no. 4 (April 1995): 204-214.

"Poland and Russia have signed a letter of intent to lay a 4,000 km, $10 billion pipeline from Russia's Iamal Peninsula to western Europe." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 91, no.13 (March 29 1993): 3.

Popov, Ivan Innokent'evich. *Vstrechi na tungusskoi zemle : Zap. sekretaria kochevogo*. Krasnoiarsk : Kn. izd-vo, 1979.

Popov, V.L. "Istoricheskaia Piatiletka Severnoi Azii." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia*, no. 4 (1929): 5-30.

--------. "Ekonomicheskoe raionirovanie Sibiri." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia*, no. 3 (1927):23-36.

--------."Rol' geografii v ekonomike Sibiri." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia* , no. 5-6 (1926): 33-41.

"Postanovleniia chrezvychainogo obshchestvennogo s"ezda v Tomske 6-15 Dekabria 1927g." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia* , no. 5-6 (1927): 150-155.

Povarich, I.P., IU.L. Galik, and V.A. Dzurgudakov. *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie rezervy povysheniia effektivnostiobshchestvennogo proizvodstvo: sbornik nauchnykh trudov*. Kemerovo: Kemerovskii gos. universitet, 1985.

"Preparations for laying Russia's first Iamal Peninsula gas pipeline are under way." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 92, no. 13 (28 March 1994): 2.

Prokhorov, B. "Kak sberech' Iamal (How to Save Iamal)." *Znanie-Sila* 7 (1988): 1-8. Translated in *IWGIA (International Working Group for International Affairs) Newsletter* 58 (1988): 113-28.

Prokof'ev, G. N. "Kyl'turnyi ochag dalekogo Severa." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 5-6 (1927): 76-78.

Prokof'eva, E.D., V.N. Chernetsov and N.F. Prytkova, "The Khants and Mansi." *The Peoples of Siberia*, ed. M.G. Levin and L.P. Potapov. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1956.

"Protecting the Tiumen Northland." *Izvestia*, 4 March 1990, p. 1.

Prigunov. M.D. "Vystavka pervoi vsesoiuznoi olimpiady teatrov narodov SSSR." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia* , no. 5-6 (1930): 318-326.

Pryde, Phil R. *Environmental Management in the Soviet Union*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Pundani, V. V. *Gosudarstvennaia derevnia Zapadnoi Sibiri vo vtoroi polovine XVIII-pervoi polovine XIX v.: uchebnoe posobie po spetskursu.* Cheliabinsk: Cheliabinskii ped in-t, 1984.

Raeff, Marc. *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1956.

Ragin, Charles. "Class, status, and 'reactive ethnic cleavages.'" *American Sociological Review* 42, no. 3 (1977): 438-50.

Raun, Alo. *The Ostiak (Khanty) and the Vogul (Mansi).* Subcontractor's monograph HRAF-7 Indiana-28. New Haven, Connecticut: Human Relations Area Files, 1955.

Remington, Thomas F. *Politics in Russia.* New York: Longman, 1999.

Revina, S. "Trevogi nashei: vnushaet serioznye opaseniia." *Severnye Prostory,* no. 37 (January 1991): 11-12.

Riasanovsky, Nicholas V. *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959.

Rosencranz, Armin; Scott, Antony. "Siberia's threatened forests. (Column)" *Nature* 355, no. 6358 (23 January 1992): 293-94.

"Rossiu Vozrodiat Reformy: obrashchenie sobrania predstavitelei natsional'noi intelligentsii Khanty-Mansiiskogo Abtonomnogo Okruga k VII s"ezdu narodnykh deputatov Rossii." *Severnye Prostory.* no. 1-2 (January-February, 1993): 20.

Rubinskii, V.I. "Pereselenie v Sibiri na Dal'nem Vostoke." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia,* no. 1, (1928): 13-26.

Rubinskii, -----. "Sovremennaia postanovka pereselencheskogo dela v Sibiri." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia,* no. 3 (1927): 43-50.

"Russia pins energy hopes on western Siberia gas (includes related article on Gazprom)." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 90, no. 36 (7 September 1992):17-20.

"Russia's Khanty-Mansiysk autonomous district soon will get an energy resource infrastructure. (\)" *The Oil and Gas Journal* 92, no. 25, (June 20 1994): 4.

"Russian oil outlook grows gloomier." *Oil and Gas Journal* 90, no. 49 (7 December 1992): 33-34.

"Russian-U.S. upstream ventures advance (petroleum exploration and development)." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 89, no. 52 (30 December 1991): 38.

Rybnikov, A.A. "Kolonizatsionnye problemy Zapadnoi Sibiri." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 1 (1927): 53-78.

Rytkheu, Iuri. "Beloe Bezmolvie?" *Ogonek* no. 17 (1989): 20-21.

Sagers, Matthew J. "Russian Crude Oil Production in 1996: Conditions and Prospects." *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 37, no. 9 (1996): 523-587.

----------. "The Energy Industries of the Former USSR: A Mid-Year Survey." *Post-Soviet Geography* 34, no. 6 (1993): 341-418.

----------. "News Notes." *Soviet Geography* 32, no. 4 (April 1991): 251-290.

----------. "Plans for West Siberian petrochemical complexes finalized." *Soviet Geography* (News Notes) 31, no. 3 (March 1990): 224-227.

Sagers, Matthew and Valeriy Kriukov. "The Hydrocarbon Processing in West Siberia." *Post-Soviet Geography* 34, no. 2 (1993): 127-152.

Savel'eva, E. A. *Etnogenez komi-zyrian Dokl. na zasedanii Prezidiuma Komi fil. AN SSSR* 13 June 1985 g. (Syktyvkar : Komi fil. AN SSSR, 1985.

Said, Edward. "Yeats and Decolonization." In *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*, Terry Eagleton, Frederic Jameson and Edward Said. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Schindler, Debra L. "Theory, Policy and The *Narody Severa*." *Anthropological Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (April 1991).

Shmidt, O. Iu. "Nashi Zadachi v 1936 godu." *Sovetskaia Arktika*, no. 3 (1936) 28-43.

"Sed'moi pashirennyi plenum Komiteta Severa." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 3-4 (1930): 336-343.

Semionov, Iuri. *Siberia: Its Conquest and Development*. Translated from the German by J.R. Foster. Montreal: International Publishers Representatives (Canada) Limited, 1963.

Shaw, Denis J.B. "Siberian regions claim republican status." *Post-Soviet Geography* 33, no. 3 (March 1992): 197-99.

Shein, I. I. "Pushnoe Khoziaistvo na putiakh pekonstruktsii." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 1-2 (1931): 5-9.

Shunkov, V.I. "Iasachnye Liudi v Zapadnoi Sibiri XVII v." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia*, no. 3-4 (1930): 184-197.

Simon, Gerhard. *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991.

Slezkine, Iuri. *Arctic Mirrors.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

--------. "From savages to citizens: the cultural revolution in the Soviet Far North, 1928-1938." *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 52-76.

Smidovich, P.G. "Sovetskoie stroitel'stvo. Ustroeniie tuzemnikh narodnostei Sovetskogo Soiuza." *Severnaia Aziia*, no. 3 (1926): 84.

Smith, Eric Alden and Joan McCarter, eds. *Contested Arctic.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.

Sokolova, Z.P. "Perestroika i sud'by Malochislennykh Narodov Severa." *Istoriia SSSR* no. 1(1990): 155-66.

--------. *Sotsial'naia organizatsia Khantov i Mansi v XVIII-XIX vv.: Problemy fratrii i roda.* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka." 1983.

--------*Puteshestvie v Iugru.* Moscow, 1982.

--------. *Na prostorakh Sibiri.* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Russkii Iazyk." 1981.

Soloviev, Sergei M. *History of Russia: Peter the Great: The Great Reforms Begin.* Volume 29, ed. and trans. K.A. Papmehl. Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1981.

Sovetskaia Arktika (nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 1936).

"Sovetskoe Stroitel'stvo. Na fronte krainego Severa." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia* (no. 3, 1928): 92-108.

"Sovetskoe Stroitel'stvo." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 1 (1928): 78-81, 104-105.

"Sovetskoe stroitel'stvo." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 3 (1927): 76-91.

"Sovetskoe Stroitel'stvo." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 2 (1926): 86-95.

"Sovetskoe Stroitel'stvo." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 3 (1926): 79-107.

"Sovetskoe Stroitel'stvo: Protokol." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia) Aziia*, no. 4 (1928): 109-123.

"Speaking with tongues (protecting native languages in Russia)." *The Economist* no. 303 (16 May 1987): 51-52.

"Stalinskaia Konstitutsia i rabota na Krainem Severe." *Sovetskaia Arktika*, no. 8 (1936):3-7.

Stewart, John Massey and Alan Wood. *Siberia: two historical perspectives*. London: Great Britain-USSR Association, 1984.

Suny, Ronald G. *Revenge of the Past*. Stanford: Stanford University Press,1993.

Swearingen, Rodger. *Siberia and the Soviet Far East: strategic dimensions in multinational perspective*. 1987.

Tabelev,V.F. "Na Iamalskom Severe" *Sovetskaia Arktika*, no. 7 (1936): 11-23.

Taleeva. "Polozhenie nenetskoi (samoedskoi) zhenshchiny." *Taiga i Tundra*, no. 2 (1930): 127-29.

Tarasov, Aleksei. "Drunken Siberia." *Izvestia* 27, April 1995, 5. Translated in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 47, no. 18 (1995): 17-18.

--------. "Siberia warns Moscow." (Republics, Provinces Vie for Constitutional Status) *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 45 no. 25 (21 July 1993): 4.

-------- "A Siberian Opposition is Crystallizing." *Izvestia* (27 March 1992).

-------- "Siberia Demands Decolonization." *Izvestia* 30 March 1992, 2. Translated in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 44, no. 13 (1992): 9-10.

Tasch, Jeremy. "Institutional Morass and the Challenge of Development: Post-Soviet Observations in Fuel and Environmental Management," unpublished paper presented at the 1996 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Charlotte, North Carolina, 9-13 April 1996.

Tilly, Charles. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1978.

Tishkov, Valery A. "The Crisis of Soviet Ethnography." *Current Anthropology* 33, no. 4 (August -October 1992): 371-394.

Tolz, Vera. "Regionalism in Russia: The Case of Siberia." *RFE/RL* 2, no. 9 (26 February 1993): 1-9.

Tonkov, Viacheslav. "Iz Nenetskogo Fol'klora." *Sovetskaia Arktika*, no. 11 (1936): 64.

Treadgold, Donald W. *Twentieth-Century Russia.* Eighth Edition. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995.

Trinh T. Minh-ha. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

Trotskii, L.D. "O Sibiri." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia*, no. 3 (1927): 5-17.
Trotskovskii, A. IA. *Razvitie sela v usloviiakh urbanizatsii : na primere Zapadnoi Sibiri.* Novosibirsk : Izd-vo "Nauka," Sibirskoe otd-nie, 1985.

Urban, Michael with Vyacheslav Igrunov and Sergei Mitrokhin. *The Rebirth of Politics in Russia.* Cabridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

"U.S. Export-Import Bank approved an $82 million loan to finance the sale of Caterpillar pipeline construction machinery for use on a Gazprom line from the Iamal Peninsula." *The Oil and Gas Journal* 91, no. 15 (April 12 1993): 2.

Vakhtin, Nikolai. *Native Peoples of the Russian Far North* (London: Minority Rights Group International, 1992.

Vitebsky, Piers. "Gas, environmentalism and native anxieties in the Soviet Arctic: the case of Iamal peninsula." *Polar Record* 26 (1990): 19-26.

----------. "Perestroika among the reindeer herders." *Geographical Magazine* 61, no. 6 (June 1989): 22-25.

Weber, Eugen *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976.

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society* Volume 1. New York: Bedminster Press, 1968.

Whitehouse, F. Douglas and David S. Kamerling. "The Asiatic RSFSR." In *Economics of Soviet Regions*, ed. I. S. Koropeckyj and Gertrude E. Schroeder. New York: Praeger Publishers 1981.

Wilkins, David E. "Modernization, colonialism, dependency: how appropriate are these models for providing an explanation of North American Indian 'underdevelopment'?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16. no. 3, (July 1993): 390-419.

"WINGAS to start construction of the JAGAL pipeline" http://www.wingas.de/wingas/html/e/presse/aktuell/p99-01e.htm (2 February 1999).

Wood, Alan and R.A. French, eds. *The Development of Siberia: people and resources.* Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1989.

Wood, Alan. "Siberian Regionalism Resurgent?" *Sibirica* 1, no.1 (1993/94): 71-86.

--------. *The History of Siberia: from Russian conquest to revolution.* London; New York: Routledge, 1991.

--------. *Siberia: problems and prospects for regional development.* London; New York: Croom Helm, 1987.

--------. "Sex and Violence in Siberia: Aspects of the Tsarist Exile System." *Siberia: Two Historical Perspectives.* London: The Great Britain-USSR Association and The School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1984.

Wyckoff, William. "Comment on "Russian Siberia: An Integrative Approach." *Soviet Geography* 30, no. 3 (March 1989)247-252.

"Zapovedniki dlia gibnyshchikh tuzemnykh plemen." *Zhizn' natsional'nostei* 133, no. 4 (31 January 1922): 1.

Zaslavsky, Victor. "The ethnic question in the USSR." *Telos* 45 (Fall 1980): 45-76.

Zhdanov, B.N. "O Proizvodstvennykh Perspectivakh Sibiri." *Sovetskaia (Severnaia)Aziia,* no. 1 (1929): 5-28.

Zwick, Peter. *National Communism.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983.